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  "Guardian Devil" part 4! Written by Kevin Smith!
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  The return of Ronan the Accuser!
- **Spider-Man: Chapter One #4 (of 13)**
  Doc Ock! Doc Doom! John Byrne!
- **Thor #8**
  Guest-starring Spider-Man and continued in PP#2!
- **The Uncanny X-Men #365**
  Art by Chris Bachalo!
- **Wolverine Winter Special**
  Guest-starring Nick Fury! Captain America! Thing! She-Hulk!
- **X-Men #84**
  "The Hunt for Xavier" Concludes!
- **X-Men: The Manga #21**
  Last ride of the Four Horsemen of Apocalypse!

On Sale December 9

- **Alpha Flight #19**
  "Alpha: Omega" Part Two!
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  Who is Spider-Man and why isn't he Peter Parker? By Mackie and Byrne! 2 Covers!
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  The Kang/Immortus War continues! By Busiek & Pacheco!
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  Double-sized battle against the Controller!
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  The quintessential Spider-Man collectible! Amazing #1-10 and Amazing Fantasy #15! Full color!
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  The Brute is the only one who knows what's coming, but he can't warn anyone!
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  "Ghosts of the Past" Featuring the return of Venom!
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  At last, the return of the Red Skull!
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  Marvel's putting the X in X-Mas! By Joe Harris and Adam Pollina!
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- **Wolverine: Not Dead Yet**
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  The return of Magneto! Story and art by Alan Davis!

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  The war against Attilan!
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  Has Earth been invaded by aliens...or something worse?!?
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  J. Jonah Jameson goes to Hell! By J.M Dematteis. Michael Zulli and John Romita Sr! 2 Covers!
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  Written by the legendary Roy Thomas!
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  Alex Ross' redefinition of the Marvel Universe! New art by Ross and John Paul Leon! New script by Jim Krueger!
- **Fantastic Four: Fireworks #2 (of 3)**
  The Marvel Remix continues! By Gerard Jones and Jeff Johnson!
- **J2 #5 MC2**
  "Ghosts of the Past" Featuring the daughter of Wolverine!
- **Marvel Magazine #9**
  48 Pages! Featuring everything coming out in March!
- **Moon Knight #4 (of 4)**
  Who is behind the conspiracy behind all conspiracies! Art by TEX!
- **Slingers #3**
  Spider-Man hunts down the costumed copycats!
- **Spider-Man: The Manga #27**
  Mitsuo is robbing factories with Spider-Man's powers! Will Yu return to his destiny?
- **Warlock #4 (of 4)**
  The mind-blowing conclusion!
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  Who are the all-new Hellions?!?
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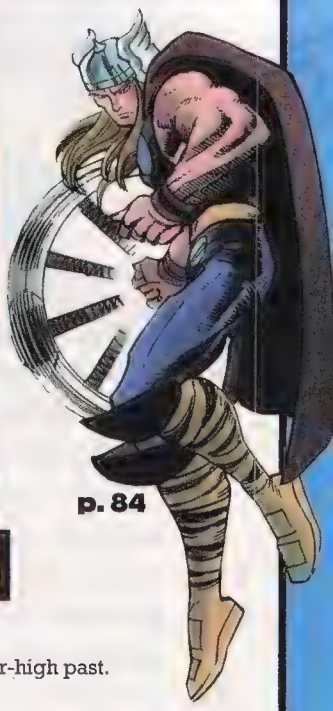

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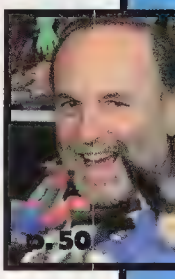

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ON THE COVERS

Batman (left) was illustrated by Jim Lee and Scott Williams, and colored by Tad Ehrlich. Skulk your way to **page 42** to see how DC's gambling on Batman's future with "No Man's Land." **Superman/Spider-Man** was painted by Alex Ross. Swing to **page 66**, to learn how Ross paints through a "Crisis."

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Holy crap in a hat! We're giving away more than $2,500 in prizes, including a DVD player with 10 DVDs, a PlayStation with 10 games, statues, comics, toys and more!!!

120 DANGER GIRLS
Draw us up your own *Danger Girl* cover and win original J. Scott Campbell *Danger Girl* artwork.

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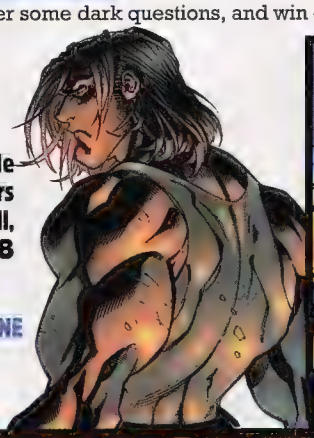
Answer some dark questions, and win original *Darkchylde* art!



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EXCLUSIVE OFFERS

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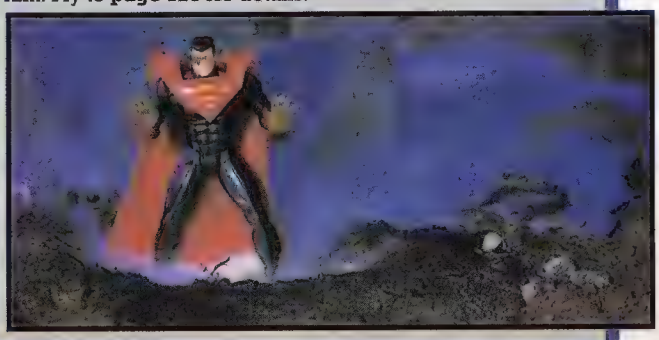
HULK#1/2

Smashing! Here's your only chance to get the exclusive *Hulk* #1/2 comic featuring an in-continuity story of the Green Goliath and the Rhino, by Terry Kavanagh and Paul Lee! Pound your way to **page 96.**

ERADICATOR ACTION FIGURE

Lookin' for your very own, totally new, never-before-seen, exceptionally crafted Eradicator action figure? We've got him. Fly to **page 128** for details.



Six students are about to find out their teachers really are from another planet.

PUBLISHER'S LETTER

"YOU PUT YOUR LEFT FOOT IN AND YOU SHAKE IT ALL ABOUT."

PARTY LIKE IT'S...

Welcome to the year-end issue of *Wizard*, always my favorite. This is the issue we spend almost the whole year planning, because we want to end with a bang. This is also the month to look back and check out the major events that occurred in the comic world—everything from the DC purchase of WildStorm to the start of Marvel Knights, Fathom, Cliffhanger, DC toys and, of course, the Marvel/Toy Biz merger. This has definitely been a busy a year with a lot of momentum going into 1999.

In this issue we've got so much great stuff. You've already seen a great cover by Alex Ross, bringing you Superman and Spider-Man. He also let us see his newest project, painting the cover to the hardcover edition of *Crisis on Infinite Earths*. He's working over George Pérez's pencils, and this stuff is phenomenal! If you have the other cover, you're getting a possible glimpse of things to come now that Jim Lee's working with DC. Even without Lee, there's a lot in store for Batman in the "No Man's Land" storyline; we'll fill you in on the details.

We also take a look at the new *Dawn* mini-series from Joseph Michael Linsner. Known for his realistically drawn (and painted) women, Linsner looks to have a hit. One guy who knows about hits is The Man himself, Stan Lee. He "presents" every Marvel comic, so we thought you should know about the man behind the legend. We also have an interview with the new head of Marvel, longtime Toy Biz head honcho Avi Arad. We also try to start a fight between Joe Madureira and Michael Turner. See what these guys think about each other and comics today.

Of course we recap all the big comic events of 1998, and answer a few questions about what might come up in 1999. There's also a free *Thunderbolts* #0 comic book included with this issue, and as a special offer, you can order *Hulk* #1/2. How perfect a way to end the year. And next year we've got lots more planned to make it the best year of *Wizard* ever.

See ya!

Gareb

P.S. Make sure you sign up for the *Wizard* Visa credit card—you'll get the rarest #1/2 comic we've ever produced, *Witchblade vs. Darkness* #1/2.

P.P.S. Check us out on the Web at www.WizardWorld.com for a daily update.

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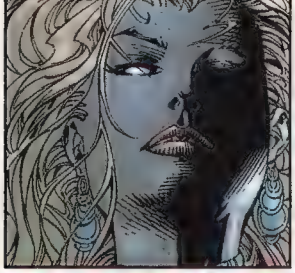
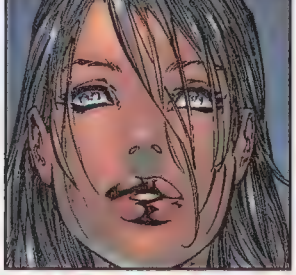
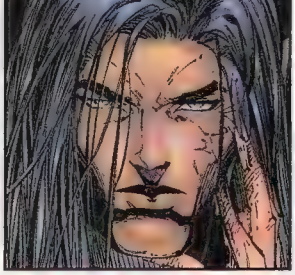
ABC AUDITED

SOUND BITES

"WE FIND OUT EXACTLY HOW TO REMOVE A HUMAN BODY FROM A TOILET. I PROMISE IT WILL INVOLVE A CUTTING TORCH."
—*Writer Warren Ellis on* Transmetropolitan *#12 (Wizard #83, July 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...



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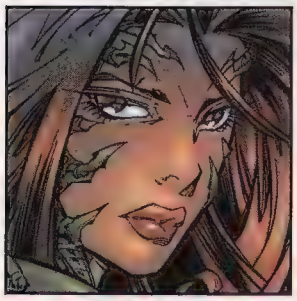
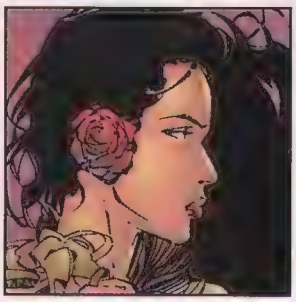
GIMMIE A O!

GIMMIE A P!

GIMMIE A SPACE!





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MASTHEAD(S)

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH THE 'WIZARD' STAFF

As 1998 draws to a close, let's turn back the clock and see what painful, humiliating events of junior high and high school years helped shape the strong and outspoken on the outside, quivering and wounded on the inside, *Wizard* Staff...

Pat McCallum
Editor-in-Chief
"I was running laps around the track with my head down when some jerkweed jock thought he'd be funny and–without any warning–started running backwards. I looked up just in time for–WHAM!–my face to collide with the back of his head, punching a jagged hole through my bottom lip with my teeth and covering me in blood. I still have the scar."

Brian Cunningham
Editor
"I was sitting at the front of the class when I had my first internal burp. I was fascinated. After a few more, I began wondering if anyone could hear me. No one said anything, so I figured no, they couldn't hear me. Another 10 minutes of burping later, I turned around and noticed the entire class staring at me like I was the vilest creature on Earth. Yes, they could hear me."

Joe Yanarella
Senior Managing Editor
"Looking for ways to pass the time on the bus ride to school–yes, this makes me look like a big jerk–I once took up a collection to kiss the ugliest girl on the bus. $6.49 later, I went to plant her one and SWOOSH!, she grabbed me and gave me a tonsillectomy. I got her off me but not before she fell in love and began following me around, making me wish I was $6.49 poorer."

Andrew Kardon
Managing Editor
"Before the first Tim Burton 'Batman' movie came out, I wore a Batman T-shirt to school. The second a group of girls saw me, they just pointed at my 'lame' shirt and made fun of me. I tried explaining about the movie, but all they could do was point and laugh. Months later it was the COUNTRY-wide fashion to wear Bat-shirts. Us *avant-garde* types are always mocked."

Trent D. McNeeley
Copy Editor
"My art teacher was giving me a hard time in front of my friends, so I decided to give her a hard time and look cool in front of my friends. So next time she gave me lip, I gave her lip. Big mistake. I spent the rest of the period sitting in a cardboard box in the corner while the other kids kept stealing glances at me like I was some sort of bad carnival attraction."

Jim McLauchlin
Senior Staff Writer
"In shop class, some guy made a torch out of a rolled-up newspaper and went around scaring people. He snuck up behind me to scare me, but got too close and lit my hair on fire. Other kids patted my head out, but I swore vengeance on the dillweed. The next day the principal asked me not to beat him up. I didn't, but that guy's still got a kidney punch with his name on it."

Matthew Senreich
Staff Writer

"I was at lunch minding my own business when the cafeteria ignited into the most violent food-fight ever. I made it through mostly unscathed, but just as it was winding down, I was targeted by five chocolate milk sharpshooters. They connected with chocolatey explosiveness as everyone laughed. And then came the mashed potatoes..."

Lars Pearson
Price Guide Manager

"Hightailing it through the farmland surrounding my school, I was being followed by attackers with water balloons. I thought I'd play it smart and cut through a farmer's land. Well, I lost my H_2O-assailants, but not before I ran thigh-deep into an overflowed septic pit filled with pig crap. I would've preferred the balloons."

Bob Marshall
Price Guide Editor

"There was this girl I was madly in love with but was too afraid to approach. After 150 almost-attempts to get her to notice me, I gave her a multiple-choice 'Will you go out with me?' invitation with 'yes', 'no' and 'I'll think about it' on there. I spent the night of the proposed date watching 'Blacula' alone for like the seventh time."

Cassie Lopusnak
Administrative Assistant

"I was in junior high when I told this guy I had a HUGE crush on him. Trouble was, he was six years older and when I told him, he looked amused, patted me on the head and said, 'That's very nice. Now go away, li'l girl'. But for the record, I did end up dating him years later and reminded him of that 'li'l girl' crack every day."

Steve Blackwell
Design Manager

"In junior high, I had the hots for this really cute girl Christine, but her friend–this chubby little troll–had the hots for me. While I spurned her advances, Christine's jilted friend filled her head with made-up crap about me. So when I finally asked her out, she gave me what was then the harshest dis of my young life: she told me to go suck an egg."

Cindy Emmert
Designer

"A boy in my class who looked disturbingly like Eddie from 'The Munsters,' like me, was quiet and kept to himself. But a group of evil cheerleader-like creatures constantly told me that he 'like, has the biggest crush on you!,' even though we had nothing to do with one another. Now that I'm a practicing witch [see Bullpen, *Wizard* #87], I'd hate to be those cheerleaders now..."

Arlene So
Designer

"During one of the last dress-rehearsals for the school play 'Cinderella,' I was shocked by a new prop and let out a startled yelp. As the evil director began screaming out 'WHO YELLED?!?,' I stood motionless with a hand clamped over my mouth. Not the best way to appear innocent. In front of everybody, I was kicked out for being disruptive. Stupid play."

James A. Walker
Designer

"I dozed off next to this hot girl on the bus. Problem was, I had a Sugar Daddy in my mouth and began to drool. So this caramelized drool ran down my face, neck, shirt into my hand. I woke up and felt this stuff on my face, but when I lifted my hand to touch it, the magazine I had been reading lifted up with my hand, glued there by the drool. That's when I noticed the girl staring at me. The rest of that bus ride was pretty quiet."

Tesslyn Pandarakalam
Production Assistant

"I shaved the back and sides of my head, but because my hair was so long, nobody noticed. One day I was walking home from school when a gust of wind blew and showed my scalp, which made a group of elementary school kids taunt me, a car of old men yell 'Freak!' and a group of preppie girls from my school wanting to kick my ass for daring to have hair like that. I kept the haircut for the rest of the year."

Daniel Reilly
Research Editor

"I was the target of the school bully, who made my life hell by doing such delightful pranks as getting 12 of his buddies to chase me around and ensure that I was late for EVERY class. One day he was hanging around giving me crap so–having had enough–I slammed my locker on his hand messing him up pretty good. He–along with two friends–later pummeled me, but I still felt pretty good about it. Jerk."

Peter Flood
Research Assistant

"Hoping to woo this really cute girl in my school, I wrote her a love poem and anonymously slipped it into her locker. As the days went by, she asked everybody in the school if it was them, her smile vanishing more and more as her 'list of the cute guys' grew shorter. Finally, with no one left, she confronted me and said 'You? You're the geek who gave me this?' I left her locker alone after that."

André D. Shell
Research Assistant

"During a super-important, packed football game where my school's team had just scored a touchdown, I thought I'd be real cool, stand tall and lead the cheer. As soon as I stood up, somebody pantsed me from behind in front of EVERYBODY! To this day I still don't know who it was, but if I ever find out, they're going to...feel... the...BANG!"

THESE LETTERS ARE NOT TO BE USED AS A LIFE-SAVING DEVICE

MAGIC WORDS

HUNGRY, HUNGRY FERRETS... THE JIM LEE ACTION FIGURE... ...AND C-3PO'S MAIL!

You asked for it, you got it. Again.

In last year's big, honkin', double-barreled, chrome-plated, crispy-coated year-end "Magic Words," we ran nothing but letters from comic writers, artists and assorted hangers-on. You seemed to like it. So for this go-'round, we'll hit ya with the same concept and some new names.

As a special double-bonus, I keep my between-the-letters blather to a minimum. Enjoy.

Dear Jim,

You know, every year at the San Diego Con, you or one of your cohorts slips me an invitation to your pool party. And every year, something comes up—a late dinner, a trip to the...uh...the ballet, an ugly scene with a band of Klingons, whatever. So what I'm asking is: Am I really missing anything? I mean, it's not like I really wanna see any of you guys in Speedos anyway.

Ron Marz
Writer, *Green Lantern*, and the guy who drove Hal Jordan nuts

Common misconception: The now-quasi-famous *Wizard* San Diego Comic Con pool party is pool as in "pocket billiards." Not pool as in "swimming." But girthsome (we're talkin' 5-foot-6 and 230 pounds of girth and not exactly "all muscle") *Wizard* staffer Buddy Scalera usually shows up in a micro-swimsuit anyway. He says it helps him distract his opponents. And boy, does it ever serve its purpose.

Dear Jim,

I'm going to take this opportunity to respond to some of the questions that I've been hearing lately at conventions or through the mail.

1) Yes, I will be writing *Daredevil* for six issues after Kevin Smith's run.

2) No, there won't be any ninjas.

3) No, Elektra won't be there either.

4) No, I won't be drawing it. Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti will. But they've asked me to paint some covers, which I'm really looking forward to.

5) No, it will not interfere with my work on *Kabuki*, which I will continue to write and paint. And I've got a new series called *Scarab* (rhymes with "Gareb") coming out, too.

David Mack
Creator, *Kabuki*

And in due kind, answers to questions I get all the time:

1) No, I won't give you Kevin Smith's home phone number. So quit asking.

2) Yes, *Kabuki* is one of life's small pleasures.

3) Yes, the rumors are true: David Mack is an all-natural kind of guy. He takes no drugs, no chemical medicines of any kind, and even though he spends about 100 (!) days a year on the road promoting his stuff at every convention he can reach, he remains remarkably healthy.

4) Today? Briefs.

5) No, I've never had an intern. And even if I did, her name wasn't "Lewinsky."

SOUND BITES

"ONE OF MY GOALS WITH THIS SERIES IS TO SHOW THAT A CAR-CHASE SCENE IN A COMIC BOOK CAN ACTUALLY WORK."
—*J. Scott Campbell on* Danger Girl *(Wizard #77, January 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

SEVEN ISSUES THAT WILL BLOW THE ORIGINAL UNIVERSE TO KINGDOM COME.
TM DC COMICS © 1998. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
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Wizard,

Quit using that bloody awful picture of me. It was taken in San Diego last year when I had jet lag so bad I could barely see, and my head was swelled up to twice its normal size. I tried to capture your photographer, but I was so tired I tripped over the iron bar I intended to modify his head with. As the distance between us grew, I attempted to use *Hitman* artist John McCrea as a large throwing dart with which to take the photographer out, but was told that just wouldn't be right. Advise your filthy photographer that if I ever catch him, I'm going to shove hungry ferrets up his backside and then staple the hole shut behind them.

Bollocks to all of you. Rule Britannia.

Now where's my invitation to the next *Wizard* convention?

Warren Ellis
Writer, *Transmetropolitan*, *The Authority*, *Planetary*

Ladies and gentlemen, there is only one Warren Ellis. Accept no substitutes.

Hi, Folks:

I take serious issue with your *Wizard* #85 "25 most memorable moments in comics history" article. It's not the nature of the individual choices; there are a number of perfectly valid ones there. What I dispute is the *title* of the article.

Comics "history," guys? Of the 25 moments cited, only two took place before 1979. The implication is that comics history started 20 years ago. But "history" goes back a heck of a lot further than that. How can any list that puts the words "memorable moments" and "comics history" together possibly imply, for example, that not a single moment drawn by Jack Kirby was truly memorable?

Last year I wrote to you of how fans believe what they read in *Wizard* without reservation, without hesitation and without qualification (using as example a fan who insisted that I wrote a particular issue of *X-Factor*—even though I didn't—because your price guide stated that I had). When you claim to be surveying comics history, you're taking on an obligation to do at least a somewhat comprehensive overview.

Generally, you guys do a credible job. But every so often, it's slip-ups such as this that get guys like me saying, "Don't miss the boat on stuff like this." *Wizard* has great power over how fans view not only where we are and where we're going, but where we've been. And with that great power comes great responsibility. I'm sure you're aware of that...particularly since the event surrounding Spider-Man's realization of this truism was one of the two pre-'79 most-memorable moments.

Peter David
Writer of stuff

Point taken. We're generally pretty forward-looking, and we concentrate a lot on "where we're going." That's a stance for which I will make no apologies. Everyone wants to know what's new and what's next. Everyone wants next year's model.

Most of our moments were more "modern." I think that comes from our forward-looking attitude. Can you make a case for our list? Sure. Could you have come up with 25 different amazingly cool moments, *all* pre-'79? Well, yeah. That's the cool thing about comics: They've been kickin' ass for 60 years.

Could we have skewed a little more "classical"? Sure. But I think any way you stack it up, we came up with 25 moments that work in *any* age. And I'm a '60s and '70s comic geek, myself.

Dear Mr. McLauchlin,

I'm no dummy. Comics are cool and comics are great and all, but the real action these days—you should pardon the pun—seems to be in action figures. We've got Gen[13] figures and my buddy J. Scott Campbell has some smokin' Danger Girl action figures in the works.

I'm also not too humble. So I'm thinking about making the Jim Lee action figure! But I'm having difficulty figuring out what kind of accessories and "action" stuff it should have. Any ideas?

Jim Lee
President, WildStorm Productions

Sure. The Jim Lee action figure should have a non-removable baseball hat (He's *always* wearin' a hat, y'know!) with an interchangeable head that has the "Gee, my robe just got ripped off *again*!" expression. In terms of accessories, I'd recommend a calendar that's perpetually one month ahead (Helps ya keep a deadline, y'know!), and a big check from DC in the back pocket. You'll sell a million.

Hey Guys!

Being relatively new to comics—even as a fan—I still remember the first time I heard of *Wizard*. A friend was explaining comic collecting to me and answered my query about how anybody knew what anything was worth with: "Well, basically, the kids find out from *Wizard*." *Wizard*? I happily conjured up an image of an animated owl wearing glasses and a pointy blue hat who appeared sporadically during Saturday morning cartoons to hoot such advisories as, "*Amazing Spider-Man* #117 now selling for $23.95 in James Cameron's basement! Tell your friends!"

I had a lot to learn.

Now, however, better educated in industry culture as I am, I thought I'd use this opportunity to introduce you to some of your up-and-coming brethren.

There are many wonderful e-mail 'zines currently in circulation, and I hope *Wizard* finds the witty, wise and refreshingly optimistic reporting and reviews of such online fanzines as *GINCHY!* and the stellar *Voice & Vision* as encouraging as I do. Isn't it great that there are still people out there who aren't ashamed to love this medium? I think they deserve a hand from their big bro'.

Devin Grayson
Writer, *Catwoman* and *Titans*

Or a hand from Devin Grayson. Those of you who wanna take Grayson's advice and have a computer that plugs into a phone line and stuff can contact the *GINCHY!* crew at joelunday@aol.com. *Voice & Vision* is reachable at BokononAOA@aol.com.

HEY! IT'S PEN PALS...

Send your name, address, age, sex and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the "Magic Words" address at the end of this column (put your age on the envelope). The only way to get your Internet address listed instead is to post your info in the Pen Pals board on America Online's "Wizard World" forum (keyword: Wizard; look in the Wizard Bulletin Board, under Message Boards). **Pre-'98 entrants:** Please resend your entries.

SOUND BITES

"LET ME BRING BACK OLLIE QUEEN AND I SWEAR I'LL DOUBLE YOUR SALES, I SWEAR I'LL BRING THAT BOOK UP."
—*Kevin Smith on* Green Arrow *(Wizard #80, April 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

Dear Wizard,

I have one comment and one question. Comment first:

I know you guys are doing some crazy "Joe Madureira vs. Michael Turner" feature this issue. When did comics become a contact sport? Joe is a good buddy of mine, and I think his work is great! So I put my money on Joe Mad-man to win! I'm gonna take a dive in the second round (Ouch! *Fathom*? "Dive!" Sorry.).

My question: How many ounces of beer can Jim McLauchlin drink in one night? Dan Fraga (the guy who helps out penciling *Witchblade* from time to time) once told me that Jim can drink 200 ounces. Now that's around two gallons, but I'm not sure Fraga can actually do math. So what's the answer?

Michael Turner
Creator, *Fathom*

The answer is no. Dan Fraga can't do math.

But if he could, he'd note that Jim McLauchlin—in cases of extreme urgency when called upon to do so by his country to preserve the republic—can drink 228 ounces of beer. Provided he has some pretzels to go with, that is.

Dear Jim,

So I've been writing comics full-time for a year now, and what a year it's been. I'd like to think that in my own "humble-yet-excitable" way, I've made the most of the last 12 months. But there's more to do. Oh, I haven't even started yet.

I didn't break into this industry to get rich (Obviously!). I broke in because from the time I was first aware of the "professional" side of comics, I saw it for what it was: a family. Dysfunctional? Yes. Tenuous? Sometimes. If I were to extend this "family" metaphor to its logical conclusion, I'd say the comics industry is like "The Bickersons." We've all been married too long, but at this point, a divorce is inconceivable.

But I love it. I wouldn't want to be in any other profession. The family has taken me in. It's nice to belong somewhere, even if I am the black sheep.

Oh, Jim—did I mention that Gareb called me up to take over "Magic Words"? Wow! First the Hulk, now this!

Joe Casey
Writer, *Cable, Incredible Hulk, Hellcop, Majestic* and whatever else he can get his hands on

In the comic book family, Joe Casey is the crazy cousin who eats paste. And he can have "Magic Words." Right after he drinks 228 ounces of beer, that is.

Dear Wizard,

In the last few years, I've done a number of conventions and personal appearances where, inevitably, someone will ask a question that takes us down a depressing road of speculation. You've probably heard these questions, too: "Are superheroes dead?" "Are we watching comics die?"

ASHLEE ANDERSON	ROBERT BANASZAK	JOSE CORREA	THOMAS H. CRAMER	JOSEPH ESPINOSA	JULIO C. FOLLECO	THORSTEN PETRICK
Age: 13 Sex: Female	Age: 23 Sex: Male	Age: 14 Sex: Male	Age: 25 Sex: Male	Age: 15 Sex: Male	Age: 18 Sex: Male	Age: 19 Sex: Male
601 W. Main, Apt. R	28 Orford Ct.	130 Rebecca St.	P.O. Box 8000	731 Merritt St.	50 E. 106th St., Madison Ave.,	Zum Bahnert 5
Whitesboro, TX 76273	Bay City, MI 48706-2031	Houston, TX 77022-3123	Bradford, PA 16701-0990	Fort Worth, TX 76114	Apt. 14D, New York, NY 10029	50189 Heppendorf, Germany
Likes: *X-Men, Gen13, Catwoman*	Likes: *Deadpool, Silver Surfer,* anime	Likes: *Spider-Man, Spawn, X-Men*	Likes: X-Men, Iron Man, Wolverine, X-Factor	Likes: Battle Chasers, X-Men, Spawn	Likes: *Incredible Hulk, Spawn, Thunderbolts*	Likes: *X-titles, X-Factor, Thunderbolts*

But one shining day in Cleveland, grim forecasts were impossible. Cleveland was the home of Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster when they created Superman more than 60 years ago. To mark that great success, the United States Postal Service rolled out a Superman stamp. Think about it! Now you can write a letter to your dear old Uncle Fred, and put a Superman stamp on it! Seems rather appropriate, doesn't it? Especially when it goes by air mail.

The occasion was marked with a ceremony that featured a five-story replica of the Superman stamp on the side of Cleveland's Terminal Tower.

It was an incredibly impressive sight. To see a comic book character honored like that is a tribute to the entire industry, and the two men who contributed so much. In the face of such an inspiring view—Superman the size of a building!—all troubles seemed far, far away and quite conquerable. After all—the Man of Steel wouldn't have it any other way.

Dan Jurgens
Writer, *Superman, Thor*

That Superman stamp is now available at a post office near you. At 32 cents, it's quite the bargain. Practical, too.

Dear Wizard,

We don't need another hero!

Well, maybe just a different *kind* of hero. I was recently asked what I attributed the success of *Battle Chasers* to. Face it: No one, myself included, could have predicted that a fantasy-based book—a comic genre that's failed miserably in the past—would become the hottest book around (And if it sounds like I'm bragging, hey—I am!).

Well, as much as I'd like to believe that we're putting out the greatest book in the land, I think there's something even *more* exciting going on. Creators are moving beyond the conventional tried-and-true superhero formula. And for the first time, fans are responding! In droves! Sure, there have always been comics on things other than superheroes, but these books were usually embraced only by small numbers, never achieving the mainstream success they often deserved.

I think over the next few years, more unconventional books will pop up. So does this mean we'll see a romance or western comic topping the charts? I'd love to see it happen! But one thing's for sure: Fans are ready for something new, and it's our duty to deliver. It's an exciting time to be in comics!

Joe Madureira
Creator, *Battle Chasers*

Those of you looking for some non-superhero jollies may wanna try Joe Mad's *Battle Chasers*, or maybe Terry Moore's *Strangers in Paradise* (soap opera drama) or Frank Miller's *Sin City* books (crime fiction).

Wizard,

Both personally and professionally, 1998 was a bittersweet year.

The year began with the birth of my second beautiful baby, followed less than a month later with the laying off of my friends and co-workers at Acclaim Comics.

By summer I realized that I no longer wanted to preside over the running of a down-scaled comics division, albeit with the joy of seeing characters such as Turok continue their development as super-cool toys and video games. The summer ended with my joyous return to the life of a writer.

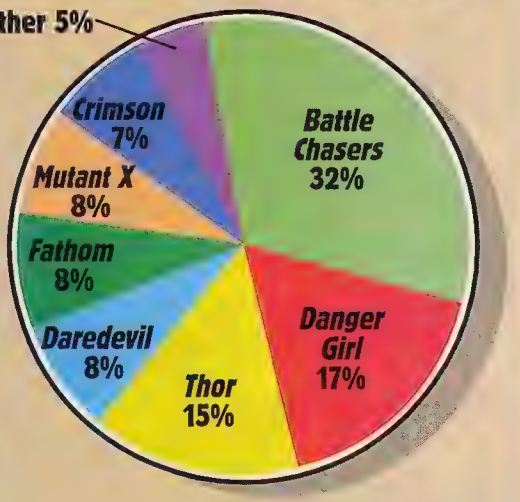
And comics? Well, in light of perpetual doom and gloom, we still see some wonderful projects coming out from Marvel and DC, the rise of Cliffhanger and the continued excellence of Top Cow's line.

We get some fun out of "Heroes Return" (It's *great* to feel like I'm 14 years old again while reading *Avengers*!), some passion out of *Superman For All Seasons* and some unrestrained excitement out of Cliffhanger.

ONLINE QUESTION OF THE MONTH

SURVEY SAYS

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE 1998 COMIC BOOK LAUNCH?



Swords, big robots and wizards! Sure, there were plenty of good comic books launched in 1998, but Joe Madureira's new fantasy title *Battle Chasers* won a landslide victory. "He's the best artist and it's the most original new book," said one online fan.

In fact, WildStorm's new Cliffhanger imprint—offering *Battle Chasers*, *Danger Girl* and *Crimson*—collectively garnered more than half the votes! One surprise was that *Thor* ranked so high, amid a sea of high-profile launches. "Nobody thought *Thor* woulda been good," said one *Thor* fanatic. "Jurgens' story is fantastic and [John] Romita Jr.'s art unbelievable—even though he's drawing two books a month!"

Another shock was *Fathom*, this year's top-selling first issue which only secured 8 percent of votes. "The hype was there. It's Top Cow and it's Mike Turner," began one respondent. "But it was more a novelty than pure entertainment." ■

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BRANDON WHITE
Age: 14 Sex: Male
4023 Leslie St.
Detroit, MI 48238
Likes: *Spider-Man, Gen13, Witchblade*

SOUND BITES

"TONY'S GOT TO HAVE CHARM AND GRACE. IRON MAN, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS A TANK."
—*Kurt Busiek, Iron Man writer (Wizard #82, June 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

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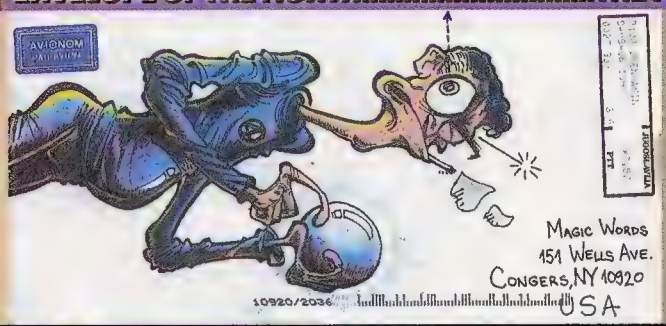
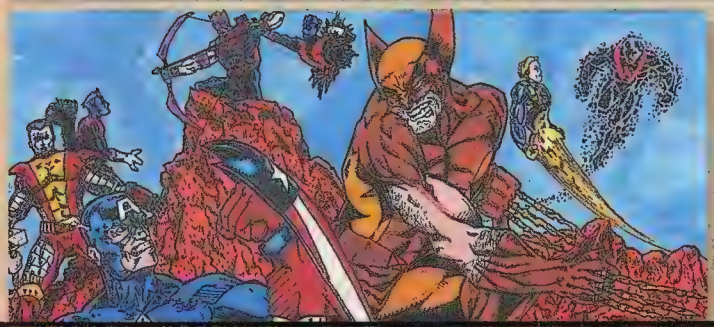
LETTER ART

Each fan who has letter art printed this month will receive a *Grendel: Black, White, & Red* #2 signed by one of the artists, *Kabuki*'s David Mack. They'll also receive a copy of this issue of *Wizard* signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff (or at least those who stumble in that day). The talented creator of this month's best envelope scores the comic, the magazine and, hang on, a piece of original Grendel art plus a *Kabuki* cover by Matt Wagner and a *Kabuki* cover by J. Scott Campbell! Are you kiddin' me?! That there David Mack, provider of these cool prizes, must be outta his mind! Artists, don't forget to include a **clearly printed return address** and a **list of characters depicted** on the back of your envelope. We mean it! Good luck!

ENVELOPE OF THE MONTH.....THE PRIZE



MR. FANTASTIC Vladimir Kuzmanov Serbia, Yugoslavia



BERSERKER RAGE Eric B. Tigley Toronto, Ontario, Canada

WIZARD PAR-TAY! David Monteiro Castelo Branco, Portugal

X-FILES PARK? Melanie Anderson Detroit, MI

Now, I'm looking forward to Alan Moore's line at WildStorm. And at Marvel Knights, I'm admiring the job Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti have done so far. I'm reading *Black Panther* with the hope that what I've known for the last two years will be recognized by others: Christopher Priest is the best superhero writer in comics today.

There's lots of great product out there. But will there be enough readers to support it? I sure hope so. Like I said: bittersweet.

Fabian Nicieza
Writer, *Gambit*

Dear Jim,

People seem to keep mixing me up with Anthony Daniels, the guy who played "C-3PO" in the Star Wars movies. At first, it was cool. People at your last two Wizard World conventions would stop and ask me, "How uncomfortable was it in that tin suit?" or "Is it true that you and Princess Leia had a fling in the *Millennium Falcon*?" People get a disappointed look on their face when they learn I just draw comic books. But now, the confusion has carried itself over to your offices.

The last two packages that you guys were *supposed* to send me were actually *sent* to Anthony Daniels way over in England by mistake. So, I think it would only be fair if I receive his mail by mistake also. I'm feeling kind of left out. So can you start sending me C-3PO's mail? If you do, I'll forget the whole thing.

Tony Daniel
Creator, *The Tenth*

Done and done. The bill for Anthony Daniels' subscription renewal is coming your way.

Well, that was interesting. Thanks to all who participated and hey—maybe we'll do this again next year. Until next month, I remain...

—Jim McLauchlin

Jim McLauchlin does NOT cry every time he watches "Dumbo," and anybody that says he does is a damn dirty liar!

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SOUND BITES

"THIS IS THE COOLEST SANDBOX I COULD EVER PLAY IN."
—Chaos! Comics publisher Brian Pulido on his working with Marvel on Supernaturals *(Wizard #83, July 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

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McFARLANE TOYS
IT'S AN ATTITUDE.

BOOGIE KNIGHTS

Surprise smash 'Marvel Knights' finds its groove

Combine scrap heap characters—many of whom haven't had their own titles in decades—with talented but erratic creators and what do you get? If you're Marvel Knights, you get a surprising runaway success.

"It's been way cooler than I thought," said Joe Quesada, who heads up Marvel Knights along with fellow Event Comics creator Jimmy Palmiotti. "We knew we had flash. But it's been a surprise beyond expectations."

For those of you just tuning in, Knights, the experimental wing of Marvel headed by Palmiotti and Quesada, has become comics' new, hip address. But not without overcoming some major obstacles.

Knights looked like a risky proposition. Artists such as Jae Lee (*Hellshock*), Mark Texeira (*Ghost Rider*) and Quesada himself had been smash successes in the past, but were plagued by late books and an inability to put out work on a consistent basis.

The characters were also iffy. Daredevil was a Marvel mainstay, but Black Panther, the Inhumans and Punisher all had previous starts and stalls. And the Knights were putting all their eggs in the *Daredevil* basket with acclaimed "Clerks" screenwriter Kevin Smith—an unproven comics' commodity—

SWINGERS Daredevil (left, with costar Black Widow) leads the charge of the surprisingly successful Marvel Knights line.

WHERE THEY'VE BEEN

MARVEL KNIGHTS

TITLE	CREATIVE TEAM	THE SCOOP
Black Panther	Christopher Priest/Mark Texeira	It's a winner! The hip, urban-contemporary writing of Priest has caught on, and *Panther* sales have barely dipped from its strong #1 levels.
Daredevil	Kevin Smith/Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti	It was expected to be the Knights standard-bearer. And it is. Marvel printed an extra 10,000 copies of #1 and it *still* sold out.
Inhumans	Paul Jenkins/Jae Lee	Another winner. Fans were wowed by Lee's art and he looks to be monthly for *Inhumans* entire 12-issue run.
Punisher	Christopher Golden and Tom Sniegoski/ Bernie Wrightson and Palmiotti	Interest in *Punisher* dropped off quickly, largely due to the fact that it's only a four-issue mini-series. It was the weakest of the bunch, but still a commercial success. ■ **JM**

SOUND BITES

"AWESOME OFFERED ME THE ONE THING NO OTHER COMPANY COULD. AND HIS NAME IS ALAN MOORE."
—*Steve Skroce on why he left Marvel's* Amazing Spider-Man *(Wizard #79, March 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

writing the book.

Despite these obstacles, the Knights line hit hard. *Daredevil* was an expected success, but every Knights #1 issue sold out, and sales remained steady with heavy reorders for #2s. The reason for the line's success? Quality of the books, and tapping a new audience.

Movie director Smith made that possible, bringing along fans of such films of his as "Chasing Amy" and "Mallrats."

"There's no doubt Kevin was our linchpin," Quesada said. "He made a big difference in getting non-comic press, which brought new readers in."

But *Daredevil* was a sure bet. For the line to do well, others books had to succeed. And Quesada knew it.

"I judge how successful we are as a line by *Black Panther*," he said. "*Daredevil* will sell based on the creators handling it. *Panther* has failed before, but [writer Christopher] Priest is bringing something completely new to it. My sole goal here is to make sure that book has legs."

And for the Knights line to have legs, the challenge is to keep the artist pool fresh.

Joe Jusko will paint *Black Panther* #6-#7 in March/April while Texeira works on future issues. Quesada also "cheerleads" to keep Lee on schedule, relying on constant prodding and frequent conversations to maintain Lee's focus. "We come from an artist's background," Quesada said, "so we understand the artist's mentality."

But art aside, the biggest piece of the "Knights" puzzle will soon be missing when Smith departs *Daredevil* after March's #7. David Mack (*Kabuki*) will take over for a six-issue stint. But Palmiotti isn't afraid of any drop-off. "All the storylines will continue," Palmiotti said. "Smith's stuff will lead right into Mack's, which will lead back to Kevin Smith." Smith plans to return at some point in 1999 for Daredevil's 35th anniversary, although it's not known for how long.

Quesada and Palmiotti will continue as *Daredevil* artists, stabilizing the book. "It was nice having a marquee name like Kevin writing," Quesada said. "Jimmy and I got to fade into the woodwork."

Quesada and Palmiotti must remain prominent when it comes to running Marvel Knights, as they are faced with the challenge of recruiting new talent. And they have quite a roster lined up.

Devin Grayson, DC's up-and-coming *Catwoman* and *Titans* writer, will do her first Marvel work on a three-issue *Black Widow* miniseries in April painted by J.G. Jones (*Shi: Black, White and Red*). Another DC standby, "Batman/Superman Adventures" producer Bruce Timm, will draw a Daredevil short story (written by Mark Waid) for a *Marvel Knights Annual* anthology in April. Then the next threshold gets crossed—an all-new character.

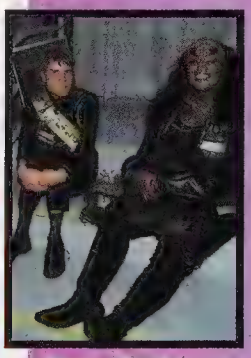
"Joe and I are refining design sketches right now," Palmiotti said. "This is a character created for Marvel that will tie into the Marvel Universe." Marvel is still going through copyright and title searches, so little information is available as yet. But Quesada and Palmiotti are scheduled to write the character in a new series with art by Pat and Alvin Lee, the manga-styled team behind the surprise-hit *Darkminds* miniseries from Image Comics.

But how much can fit in the line? Quesada says that shouldn't be a problem, as most new Knights launches will be special projects and mini-series. The entire line is planned for the current four books a month, or perhaps a fifth. "We could do more, but I might have to stop drawing to do that," Quesada said. "There is a certain amount of responsibility I feel, having helped start this. I feel I have to draw, so I'm staying in the game."

And Marvel Knights' success has shown that this is one game Quesada and Palmiotti know how to play. ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

Comic fan paints Spawn logo on ass at recent comic show. "Hey...that lady's got a Spawn logo painted on her ass!" a stunned fanboy commented moments before excusing himself to the men's room.

Fanboy Daredevil at local con tries to entertain attendees: "I'm Daredevil, the Man without...CHANGE!" the crimson irritant exclaimed to fans who wished he'd just go bother the Space Ghost model.



Winner of Star Trek "Klingon for a Day" contest announced. "I've won a small girlie boy," a beaming Wanda Jackson told reporters before selling his kidneys on the black market.

PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHRALLER

WHERE THEY'RE GOING

MARVEL KNIGHTS

TITLE	CREATIVE TEAM	THE PREDICTION
***Black Widow* #1-#3**	Devin Grayson/ J.G. Jones	Better than *Punisher*. A new Black Widow is introduced, and Quesada hints that repercussions of the series could be huge.
Marvel Knights Annual	various	It's a one-shot with multiple short stories. The stories should be cool, but on the whole, nothing major. But it's a great way to get new talent in the door.
Untitled	Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti/Pat and Alvin Lee	The only sure thing is that the Lees, riding on their *Darkminds* success, are scorching hot. If the character clicks, this book could be a monster. ■ **JM**

BUSIEK'S 'ASTRO CITY' WILL RETURN WITH ROSS INTACT

Astro City is still alive, thank you very much. And so is Kurt Busiek, with a little help from his friends.

After a year of sinus infections and surgery (not to mention the coming of his soon-to-be-born first child), the *Astro City* creator is finally coming up to speed. He's written two new issues, both due in early 1999. Readers will remember seeing *Astro City* #14 hit shelves in April, 1998. It hasn't been back since. "We had the first issue of a multi-part story come out, then sinus infection problems struck," Busiek said.

Although rumors arose that cover artist Alex Ross had left the book ("It's just not true," Ross insisted) and fearful fans awaited a cancellation notice, Busiek never intended to leave the City. "*Astro City* is the most important book in my workload. It comes first when I'm physically capable of doing it."

Busiek's illness put him behind on his writing duties for Marvel Comics, too—that's why he's getting an assist from writer Roger Stern (*Action Comics*). Stern begins co-plotting the 12-issue *Avengers Forever* mini-series with December's #3. He's also co-plotting and dialoguing *Iron Man* starting with January's #14. Stern will be on *Iron Man* until *Forever* is completed in late '99.

The duo finished planning the next year of *Iron Man* recently. There are big plans, including appearances from Fin Fang Foom and Madam Masque. "And we're going to find out who's been trying to kill Iron Man since issue #1," Busiek said.

So, with recovering health and daughter Sydney Ann (Already named!) on the way, Busiek's asking for a little understanding from his readers. "If there's one thing I've learned over the last year, it's 'Don't promise what you can't deliver.' All I can say is this is my plan, and I'm going to keep doing what I'm doing."

■ CHRIS HUTCHINS

HE'S NOT DEAD Well, Confessor (right) still is, but Kurt Busiek ain't with *Astro City* returning in early '99.

THEBUZZBIN

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE COMIC INDUSTRY

'SPAWN' GOES DARKER! How much darker *can* it go? All the way back to the Dark Ages! Well-placed Todd McFarlane Productions spies tell us a "Medieval Spawn" ongoing series is being readied for spring of 1999. More details as they come.

'HYPER' TIMES AT DC! Keep an eye peeled for January's *Superboy* #60. Word is that this ish debuts a new DCU concept called "Hypertime" that grows out of December's "Kingdom Event." DC is playing the double-secret routine as to just what "Hypertime" is, but buzz is building that it's big.

WONDER WOMAN

DC DECK SHUFFLES! Eddie Berganza is the new editor on DC's Superman line. Maureen McTigue is the new editor on *Wonder Woman*. And while 1999 is locked and loaded for the Batman line, we hear big changes will hit Gotham come year 2000. New editors often sweep in with new creators and new concepts. So keep an eye on the DCU for big changes.

BLEAK WORLD, GREAT OUTLOOK! Speaking of the locked-and-loaded Batman line, word-of-mouth is building on "No Man's Land." And *Danger Girl*'s J. Scott Campbell is definitely in for a cover or two!

DEATH TO THE JLA! That wacky Grant Morrison! The writer says he expects to leave DC's top-selling *JLA* in late '99, but word is he ain't goin' alone. Morrison says he wants to kill off some JLA members in his farewell storyline on the title! No word from DC on who will bite it, but Morrison says Aztek will be involved and readers will learn of the hero's "final fate."

'WORLD'S WORST' RETURN? Just maybe. Acclaim Comics is clawing its way back, and it looks like *Quantum and Woody*, the self-professed "World's Worst Superhero Team," just may see publication again in 1999.

we looked it up

WHO? WHERE? WHY?

NI•CI•E•ZA (nee SEE ay zuh), Fabian; proper noun. 1961-present; 1 Comic creator with current writing credit on *Gambit* and former writing credits on *X-Men* 2 administrator who was a former editor at Marvel Comics and former publisher of Acclaim Comics 3 painful swelling condition in the knee joints often found in retired football players

PHOTO BY ALBERT ORTEGA

SOUND BITES THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"YOU COULD SAY THAT *UNCANNY X-MEN* IS CLASSIC COKE AND *X-MEN* IS NEW COKE."
—*Steven T. Seagle, then-Uncanny X-Men writer (Wizard #79, March 1998)*

X-MEN WATCH

UP-TO-THE-MINUTE NEWS ON YOUR FAVORITE MUTANTS

• A three-month "Magneto War" X-Men crossover is coming. And it looks like the whole hoo-hah will be kicked off by *The Magneto War: Prologue*, a January one-shot written by fill-in X-Men writer Alan Davis and drawn by Lee Weeks (*Daredevil*).

• The possibility exists there may actually be a *third* core X-Men title to join *X-Men* and *Uncanny X-Men* at some point in 1999. But, word is if it arrives, it's planned to be around only for a short period of time.

• Why a possible third "X-Men" title? There's too many good artists! Today's hot rumor tells us that acclaimed former *Incredible Hulk* artist and *X-Men* fill-in guy Adam Kubert may become the regular artist on *X-Men*. And Brandon Peterson, who filled in admirably on *X-Men* #80, is a front-runner for *Uncanny*. Where's that leave current *Uncanny* penciler Chris Bachalo? Or rumored soon-to-be *X-Men* penciler Leinil Yu? No one knows...yet.

• Oh, yeah–the search for new ongoing X-Men writers? Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras has officially stated that John Byrne (working on many, many projects) and Peter David (who was never really interested in the first place) are definitely out of the running. Harras also says that while he'd love to get free Chicago Cubs tickets, Slammin' Sammy Sosa has also been ruled out.

RACIAL SLUR LEADS TO RECALLED 'WOLVERINE'

More than 250,000 copies of a *Wolverine* comic were recalled when an anti-Semitic slur was discovered in copies.

Wolverine #131—which went on sale Sept. 30, the Jewish holy day Yom Kippur—erroneously contained the line "the kike known as Sabretooth." The line should have read "the killer known as Sabretooth."

Marvel Comics attributed the error to the typesetter, Comicraft. In fact, according to Marvel spokesperson Maryanne Caruso, the error was discovered by Marvel editors and relayed to the typesetter prior to printing, but for some reason, not corrected.

"This was done without willful intent," Caruso said. "As far as being offensive to people, we are very, very sorry. We hope people understand this is a mistake and we are taking the appropriate steps to ensure it never happens again."

"The Comicraft letterer who made this egregious mistake did so unwittingly, with no malice in his heart," Comicraft President Richard Starkings said. "This was no childish, thoughtless prank, but an honest, though grave, mistake."

The book was immediately recalled by Marvel and the entire comic was reprinted with a disclaimer on the first page that it was the corrected version. Retailers were contacted and asked to ship back all unsold versions of the comic.

Ironically, retailers were capitalizing on the error, marking up the price of the comic with the slur and selling it for up to five times its cover price of $1.99. ■ **DON PRICE**

"Vejur requires the carbon units to disclose the information."
-Ilia (Persis Khambatta), Star Trek: The Motion Picture, 1979

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NEWS&NOTES

ABACULUS
Sparking up the new year is *Love Bomb* #3, which features the return of Janet Street Monkey. And everybody loves monkeys! Everybody!

ABC STUDIOS
Double Impact: Alive #1 (of 3) features Jazz and China quitting their mercenary ways. But what they venture into might be even more dangerous!

ACCLAIM COMICS
In January's *Nio* #3, Nio infiltrates the Project compound to bring the murderer of Jimmu's parents to justice.

AWESOME-HYPERWERKS
Awesome headliner Supreme crosses over in January's *Cover* #2, by Jeph Loeb and **Ian Churchill**.

BONGO COMICS
The *Simpsons Comics Big Bonanza* brings 120 pages of all-ages humor featuring Krusty the Clown, Homer Simpson and Mr. Burns in separate tales of life in Springfield.

CARTOON BOOKS
In December's *Bone* #36, grifting cousin Phoney Bone actually goes straight. But is that a good thing?

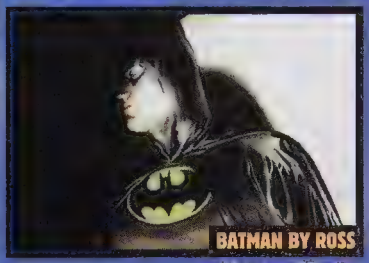
CHAOS! COMICS
Hart Fisher, the most dangerous man in comics, takes over writing chores on January's *Evil Ernie* #8.

CLAYPOOL COMICS
Elvira goes on Christmas vacation in December's *Elvira* #68. And January's *Elvira* #69 has our nation's leader—yep, the president—asking for Elvira's help to get out of the scandal he's in.

CRUSADE COMICS
Bill Tucci's "Battlebooks" expand in January with new books featuring Shi and Top Cow Productions' Witchblade.

DARK HORSE COMICS
The Force will be with you in the massive 96-page *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back–Manga* #1 in January. *Empire*'s epic story will be told in four parts, with each issue reinterpreting **George Lucas**' classic movie in manga (Japanese comic book) style.

DC COMICS
January's year-long Batman "No Man's Land" event kicks off with—appropriately enough—a *No Man's Land* 38-page one-shot. Look for a nifty, swell "moving" lenticular cover by superstar painter **Alex**


BATMAN BY ROSS

cont'd on page 30 →

PREQUEL SECRETS MAY LEAK IN 'STAR WARS' ONGOING

Looking for ever-elusive details on the "Star Wars" prequel movies? There's a *chance* you might find some here.

"This is a separate continuity, so it isn't *directly* related to the first of the prequels," writer Jan Strnad said. "But there are familiar 'Star Wars' concepts and there have to be connections to the 'Star Wars' comic. I'm just not at liberty to discuss those."

Strnad, a veteran of many European comics, is joined by penciler Anthony Winn for the December launch of Dark Horse Comics' *Star Wars*, Dark Horse's first-ever ongoing 'Star Wars' series.

But the series' first plot does take place 100 years prior to the original trilogy, so readers may get just a taste of what's to come. In the first arc, a world far, far away is low-tech by choice. "So the Republic," Strnad said, "is trying to seduce the young people with high-tech devices and foment a rebellion to bring the planet into the Republic. It's a story of cultural clash between the old and the young—and caught in the middle of it is Ki-Adi-Mundi, a Jedi Knight."

Ki is basically anti-technology. "But it's not a black-and-white issue with him," Strnad stressed, "because he realizes there are advantages to certain high-tech devices. He does wield a lightsaber."

For more details, fans will have to check out the series' first story arc, which wraps in May—just in time f or release of the first prequel. ■ **SCOTT A. AUBREY**

LOBDELL JUMPS ABOARD 'THE TENTH'

Relaunch to include Lobdell's four-issue mini-series in '99

Scott Lobdell is bringing evil to *The Tenth*.

Creator Tony Daniel's current ongoing *The Tenth* series is scheduled to end with November's #14, but will relaunch in February, 1999, as a series of four-issue mini-series. Lobdell (*Wildcats*) is scheduled to write the first arc, titled "Black Embrace."

"As to who else will write, everything is open after Scott," Daniel said. "I intend to write an upcoming arc. But if it's not me, it'll be someone of high caliber like Scott to help me flesh out the characters."

Lobdell's run will focus on The Tenth reverting back to evil. Ever since his departure from his love-interest Esperanza, The Tenth has become more and more a monster. "The story will look at why Esperanza brings out the good in The Tenth, and how he has now turned into the grips of darkness," Daniel said. "We'll see what their relationship *really* was."

Why the change in publishing format? "It's still in continuity and monthly, but separated distinctly in terms of story arcs," Daniel said. "This way, it's easier to bring new readers in as opposed to having them be intimidated by high issue numbers. Plus, you have a very defined beginning, middle and end to each story."

The second mini-series is tentatively titled "Infection," and will be followed by an untitled one that will deal with supporting character Adrenaline. Beyond Lodbell and Daniel, another name rumored to write a mini-series is *Sandman*'s Neil Gaiman. "We worked together on a *Frank Frazetta Fantasy Illustrated* story," Daniel said. "Whether or not he writes *The Tenth*? It's a real longshot, but anything can happen." ■ **MATTHEW SENREICH**

SOUND BITES
"I'M THE COMPANY PRESIDENT, SO I CAN MAKE MYSELF THE LEAST EXPENSIVE PENCILER."
—*Rob Liefeld on why* Re:Gex *would continue despite a trimming of the Awesome Entertainment comics line (*Wizard *#82, June 1998)*
THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

SUPERMAN FACES FF

Superman and the Fantastic Four? It sounds like a BIG project.

It is. When *Superman and the Fantastic Four: The Infinite Destruction* hits stands in March, 1999, writer/artist Dan Jurgens will need 64 big pages to tell the story. "We finally nailed it down," Jurgens said. "It'll be treasury-sized, 10-by-13 inches, just like those old '70s volumes."

Big format and page count are joined by the biggest of villains: Galactus, devourer of worlds! It seems Superman becomes aware Galactus was involved in the destruction of his home planet, Krypton. So he seeks revenge, and the help of a group who knows Galactus well: the FF. But things wrinkle when Galactus chooses Superman as his new herald. "Superman is already a juggernaut," Jurgens said. "But Galactus transforms him with the Power Cosmic, making him even *more* powerful and turning him against the FF."

The fur flies and Jurgens, the current *Superman* writer, won't give up the winner. "The FF were Marvel's first superheroes," he said. "So I've always regarded them as Marvel's No. 1. But Superman is first among *all* superheroes. It'll be...interesting." ■ JIM McLAUCHLIN

JOKER BEATS BATMAN!

After all these years, the Joker *finally* outraced Batman.

Batman- and Joker-themed race cars made their debut Oct. 4 at the UAW-GM Quality 500 Winston Cup race at Charlotte Motor Speedway. The cars were driven by NASCAR pros Dale Jarrett and Kenny Irwin, respectively. And despite being involved in a crash, the crafty Joker finished 20th, beating out the 24th-place finish of Batman.

Even though the Joker got the last laugh, the real winners are fans. The Batman and Joker cars will be featured in tons of merchandise, including collectible die-cast replica cars, apparel and other souvenirs. "Only Batman can offer the true heart-pounding excitement of a real car chase," said Joel Ehrlich, DC Comics consumer products senior vice president. The 181,000 fans who cheered the finish in Charlotte seemed to agree. ■ JULIANA SCANLAN

contest winners

LUCKY STIFFS

- **Jorge Ernesto Corral Jacobson** of Mexico City, Mexico strolled off with a kickin' Wolverine statue and a slew of other X-goodies in *Wizard* #85's "New Era for X-Men" contest!
- **Aslan Schue** will be able to decorate his house with the framed and Todd McFarlane-autographed animation cel from the "Spawn" HBO series he won in *Wizard* #85's "Spawn 2 Home Video" contest!
- **Sean Wiener** of Sugarland, Texas, won *Giant-Size X-Men* #1, the very first appearance of the new X-Men, in *Wizard's X-Men Special*!

Ross. . . Also in January, DC will release ***The New Teen Titans Archives***, reprinting issues #1-#8 of the series, marking the first Archives book to cover the modern age. . . In March, DC/Vertigo will launch a new ongoing ***Swamp Thing*** series starring Tefe, daughter of the original Swamp Thing and Abby Arcane.

• WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS

It's official: Cliffhanger titles *Battle Chasers* and *Danger Girl* are now bimonthly, ***Crimson*** remains monthly.

DREAMRIDERS WORKSHOP

Both the police and the evil Manslaughter are after the hitman in ***Revenance***, *Legion of One* #2, due in December.

HARRIS COMICS

The new *Vampirella* writer? His name is David Conway and he used to be the lead singer of rock band **My Bloody Valentine**. Catch his comic book debut in January's *Vampirella Monthly* #0.

IMAGE COMICS

• AVALON STUDIOS

Resident Hellcop Virgil Hilts risks all to uncover corruption at the Pan-Dimensional Security Corps in January's *Hellcop* #4. Writer **Joe Casey** (*Cable*) presides.

• HIGHBROW

Overlord is back! But just who's wearing the Overlord armor? **Erik Larsen** wants you to pick up January's *Savage Dragon* #57 to find out!

• TOP COW COMICS

Sara Pezzini uncovers mysterious connections between bad guy Ken Irons and the **Witchblade** in January's *Witchblade* #29.

KITCHEN SINK PRESS

For something completely gross, try January's ***Skin Eater Comics*** #1. This 24-page black-and-white anthology book features story and art from a number of up-and-coming creators. . . ***James O'Barr's The Crow*** #1 starts anew in January, with supervision by Crow creator O'Barr.

MARVEL COMICS

Penciler **John Romita Jr.** takes center stage as December's *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* #2 crosses over with *Thor* #8. . . Cable's full origin is retold in December's *Cable* #64 by **Joe Casey** and Jose Ladronn.

NGNG STUDIOS

Rana 7's "The Quest for Lady Luck" #4 (of 6) hits stands in January as Zeus and Athena search to save Poseidon, Ares and others from the evil hand of the Prince of Misfortune!

ONI PRESS

Nobody #3 features art by popular *X-Files* artist **Charlie Adlard**. . . **Scott Morse**, the Eisner-nominated creator of *Soulwind* and *Visitations*, starts *Volcanic Revolver* #1.

cont'd on page 32 →

READERS TO DECIDE FUTURE MC2 BOOKS

Think you don't have any say in comics?

Wrong.

This January, Marvel's MC2 line of books—*Spider-Girl*, *A-Next* and *J2*—will ship with ballots allowing readers to vote on what MC2 characters or groups should get their own titles. Anywhere from one-to-three new titles (or none at all) could be launched based on reader demand.

For Tom DeFalco, the line's originator and writer, the idea makes perfect sense. "The whole line came about through popular demand," DeFalco said. "We put the first Spider-Girl story out there [in *What If...?* #105], and people demanded more. The initial success has taken us all by surprise. So Marvel came and asked about adding new titles. Given the way the line came about, it seemed the best way to go about it was to go to the readers and ask them what they want."

ROCK THE VOTE Will Argo, Son of Hercules, get his own MC2 book? A reader poll will decide in January.

Readers can vote for characters such as Thunderstrike, Stinger or the Uncanny X-People, which DeFalco said "seems to be a name everyone hates." DeFalco said, "The ballots will be pretty full because there are a lot of characters out there. Just to make things harder, we're introducing three new characters in January as well." January will see the debut of Argo the Almighty, the son of Hercules; Magneta, the new mistress of magnetism; and Ladyhawke, a mysterious character who DeFalco claims "is a wild-card in every sense of the word."

It's your chance to see comics the way you want them. So get out and vote, True Believers! ■ **MATTHEW BRADY**

DOUBLE TAKES

WHA THE? WHO THE? WHERE?

JAY AND SILENT BOB: FOUND!

Marvel Knights guys Kevin Smith, Jimmy Palmiotti and Joe Quesada threw down the challenge in a *Wizard* #86 interview: *No one* would be able to find the hidden Jay and Silent Bob appearance in *Daredevil* #1. "Especially if they're looking with their eyes," Smith said.

Well, on the first day of the book's release, the chase was over. "We got a fax from the Chaos Comic Superstore in England," Quesada said. "They found it."

Check out *Daredevil* #1, page 12, panel 2. Those Braille speed-dial buttons on blind attorney Matt Murdock's phone? Looks like he calls "Jay" and "Bob" a lot. For their efforts, the Chaos crew got an original Quesada Daredevil sketch and oodles of merchandise. "We were amazed at the volume of response," Quesada said. "People just like trying to win free stuff, I guess." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

SOUND BITES THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"IF [CASSIDY] CAN HANDLE A BULLET IN THE HEAD—AND HE HAS—HE CAN HANDLE HIS WHISKEY."
—*Garth Ennis, Preacher writer, on his vampire creation's ability to hold his liquor (Wizard #86, October 1998)*

COMPARE...AND CONTRAST

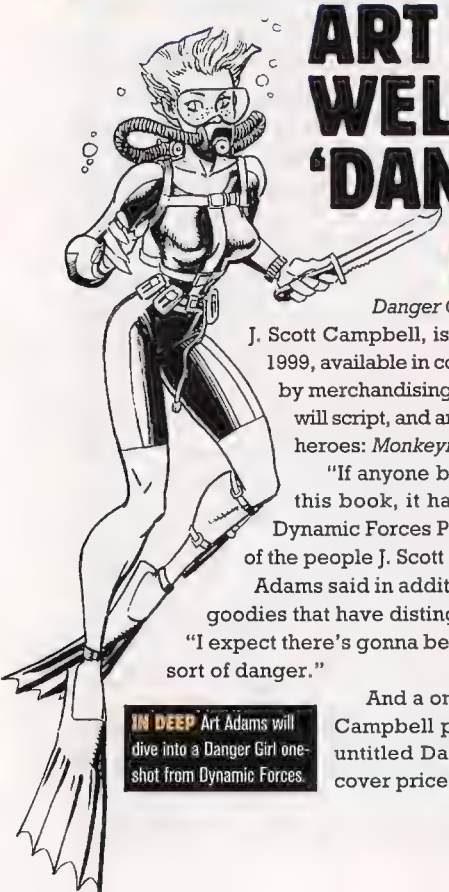
ESCAPE FROM 'NO MAN'S LAND'

Batman's upcoming "No Man's Land" storyline features the Gotham City inhabitants all leaving town. Remember that good ol' John Carpenter flick "Escape From New York" starring Kurt Russell as action hero Snake Plissken? The two sound mighty familiar. Just look and see:

'NO MAN'S LAND'	'ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK'
U.S. government has given up on Gotham.	U.S. government has given up on Manhattan and turned it into a prison.
Batman's named after a bat.	Snake's named after . . . a snake.
Kurt Russell is rumored to play Batman in the next movie sequel.	Kurt Russell rumored to play Snake again in another "Escape" sequel.
Batman must fight gang bosses like The Penguin.	Snake must fight gang bosses like The Duke.
Batman flies a goofy Bat-plane in Gotham.	Snake flies a goofy biplane into Manhattan.
Batman wears a mask over his face.	Snake wears a patch over one eye.
Batman named after a bat that smashes the crap out of his study window.	Snake uses a bat to beat the crap out of that guy in the boxing ring.
Call him "Batman."	Call him "Snake"–er, "Plissken"–er...
Sexy Catwoman is a citizen.	Sexy Adrienne Barbeau is a prisoner (and voices Catwoman on the "Batman" cartoon).
Batman speaks with a gravelly voice.	Snake speaks with a gravelly voice.
Batman is curt and brusque.	Snake is Kurt Russell.

PHOTO COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION

ART ADAMS WELCOMES 'DANGER'



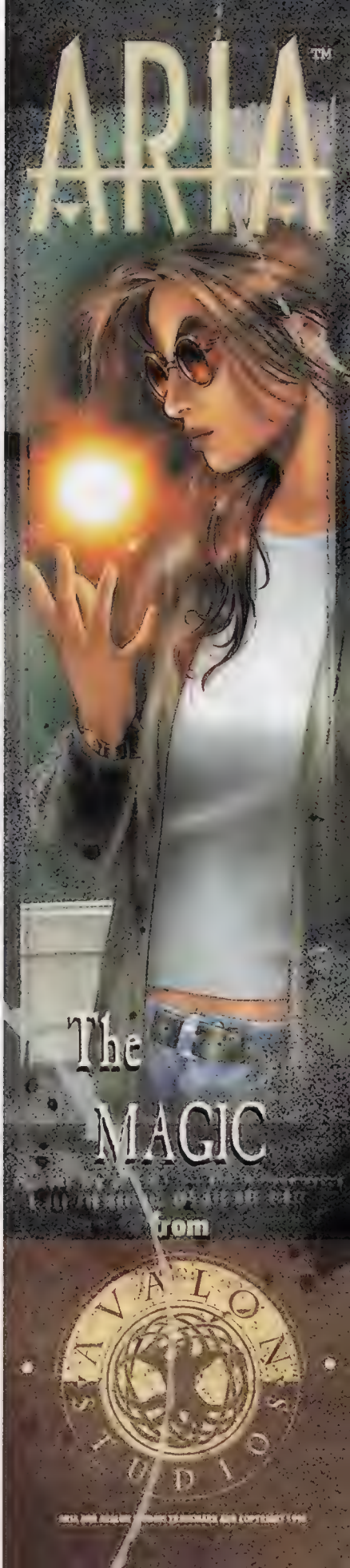
Looks like one bimonthly book ain't enough for the Danger Girls. *Danger Girl*, the adventurous brainchild of artist J. Scott Campbell, is due for a one-shot special in March, 1999, available in comic stores everywhere and published by merchandising company Dynamic Forces. Campbell will script, and art will be handled by one of Campbell's heroes: *Monkeyman & O'Brien* artist Arthur Adams.

"If anyone besides Campbell was going to touch this book, it had to be someone of Art's caliber," Dynamic Forces President Nick Barucci said. "He's one of the people J. Scott grew up appreciating."

Adams said in addition to interviews, sketches and other goodies that have distinguished previous Dynamic offerings, "I expect there's gonna be girls, and there'll probably be some sort of danger."

And a one-in-four alternate cover will feature Campbell pencils inked by Adams. The as-yet-untitled Danger Girl special will carry a $6.95 cover price. ■ **JAKE ROSSEN**

IN DEEP Art Adams will dive into a Danger Girl one-shot from Dynamic Forces.

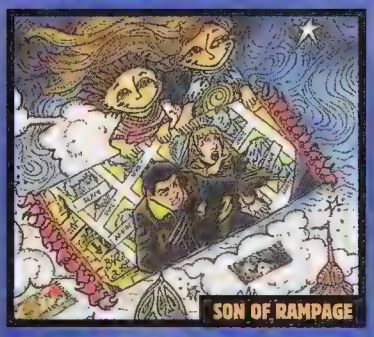


PENNY-FARTHING PRESS
Captain Gravity debuts in December with the origin tale of the 1940s Hollywood hero. *Captain Gravity* continues in January with issue #2 where protagonist Joshua must stop the Nazis from using super-weapon X-115.

QUANTUM CAT ENTERTAINMENT
Avalon Studios' **Whilce Portacio** and Brian Haberlin contribute a new "Ulysses" story and alternate cover to January's *Frank Frazetta Fantasy Illustrated* #5.

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT
Lusipher's been bitten by a werewolf! So Jace must hunt down the wolf in January's *Poison Elves* #43.

SLAP HAPPY COMICS
The second annual *Son of Rampage* anthology will feature 20 all-new stories by 27 independent creators including Josh Blaylock (*Penguin Bros*), **J. Torres** and Tim Levins (*The Copybook Tales*) and Chris Yambar (*Mr. Bear's Adventure*). The 168-page whopper is $13.95.


SON OF RAMPAGE

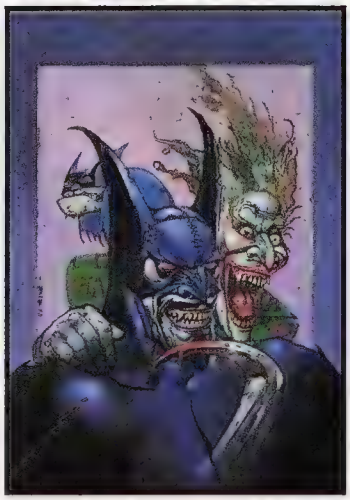
SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS
Potential: Unit Four in January continues **Ariel Schrag**'s amazing real-life high-school diaries.

SLEEPYHOUSE GRAPHICS
Hanzo: Freeway Ninja—the story of a rock musician living in a small fishing town—debuts in December.

HANZO: FREEWAY NINJA

VIZ COMICS
All hail the Crash King, Snev. He's a true sportsman, playing the bloodiest game ever—Motorball. Read about his crash-filled adventures in the 136-page *Ashen Victor* trade paperback this January. This book features story and art by *Battle Angel Alita* creator **Yukito Kishiro**.

'PSYCHOTIC' BISLEY RETURNS WITH LOBO AND BATMAN



Simon Bisley, the wild, violent artist who put Lobo on the map, is back on the Main Man.

DC Comics' 48-page *Batman/Lobo* one-shot in March will pair Bisley with *Lobo* and *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* writer Alan Grant. "The Joker hires Lobo to kill Batman," Grant said. "But first, he wants Batman defeated, humiliated and unmasked. He wants all of Gotham to laugh at Batman."

Grant said the tone of the "Elseworlds" project is "much more comedy than serious. But Batman is never a comedy character. He maintains his integrity throughout. And that makes it even more a hoot."

And Biz? Is he comedic or serious? "What can I say?" Grant laughed. "He's psychotic, but he's the best. I wrote the script and Bisley penciled it. His art outshone my script, so I went back and completely rewrote it. Everything Simon touches, he makes better." ■ JIM McLAUCHLIN

THUMBING OFF

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

THUMBS UP

CASEY'S 'HULK': Writer Joe Casey is wedged between 12 years of Peter David on *Incredible Hulk* and a new #1 relaunch. But in his seven issues on *Incredible*, he's kickin' ass with riotous slugfests, the search for Betty Banner's killer...and he's even made the Ringmaster and his Circus of Crime dangerous! Kudos to one of Marvel's up-and-coming talents!

STAR WARS MANGA: The best written and most entertaining comic adaptation of "Star Wars" ever? Yeah! Dark Horse Comics' Japanese-styled manga version has fluid, fast-paced storytelling that captures the excitement of the actual films! We can't wait to see manga adaptations for "Empire Strikes Back" and "Return of the Jedi."

REVIVAL OF AUNT MAY: When Marvel killed Aunt May back in *Amazing Spider-Man* #400, it killed a part of Spider-Man. Aunt May is *essential* to the Spider-Man mythos. Bringing her back in *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* #97 helped add new life to Spidey.

THUMBS DOWN

'WIZARD': Yep. We were wrong to want Aunt May dead. Waaay back in *Wizard* #45, we said to chuck the old bat in some dirt. But seeing Peter Parker without Aunt May is like seeing a Peter Parker that's diminished. We admit our mistake and hang our collective head in shame.

'ASTRO CITY' MIA: Writer Kurt Busiek hasn't put out a new issue since April's *Astro City* #14. That's a loooong time to wait, especially since the last issue ended in a cliffhanger. *Astro City* is a great book! We don't wanna wait till early '99!

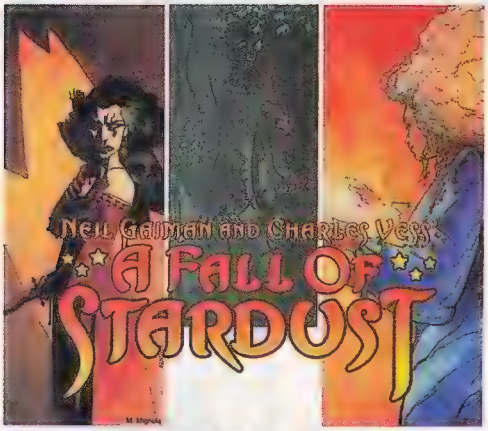
NOTHING ELSE! Really! It was a pretty loving month and we're all feeling very happy. You should, too. Go hug someone.

SOUND BITES

"I REALLY THINK I BURIED THAT FRANCHISE."
—*George Clooney on his role in the "Batman and Robin" movie debacle (Wizard #86, October 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

CREATORS LINE UP FOR 'STARDUST' BENEFIT



STAR POWER Big-name talent comes together for a good cause.

Here's a fairy tale *guaranteed* to have a happy ending.

Neil Gaiman and Charles Vess are slapping an encore on their acclaimed *Stardust* mini-series. The occasion? The proceeds from the project will assist Vess' wife, who was recently injured in a car accident. "Everybody's doing everything for free and everybody I've asked has said yes." Vess said. "It's a great feeling."

A Fall of Stardust, a February offering with a $12.95 cover price, will consist of two "Stardust" books and 30 art plates from a number of artists, all wrapped in a new Vess painting. Gaiman and Vess will contribute one Stardust book, and those art plates are contributed by the likes of *Hellboy*'s Mike Mignola, *Bone*'s Jeff Smith and many others.

A Fall of Stardust will be available in comic stores, or direct from Vess' Green Man Press. Call Green Man at (540) 623-0796 or order through its Web site at www.greenmanpress.com. ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

LARSEN BLASTS INTO 'NOVA'

GOING 'NOVA' Now that Nova has his own book again, are the New Warriors far behind?

Call him the busiest man in comics.

Three months ago, Erik Larsen wrote one book—his creator-owned *Savage Dragon*. By March, 1999, Larsen will be writing his *fourth* monthly: A new *Nova* ongoing from Marvel.

Nova is the story of Richard Ryder, a teen suddenly given the powers of flight and superspeed by an alien race. But why Nova, a character who's been canceled before? "Nova has many of the trappings of Spider-Man," Larsen said. "He's a great teen character. My take is, 'What would the reader do if *he* got superpowers tomorrow?' I think they'll be able to see things through Nova's eyes."

Penciler Joe Bennett (*Supreme*) will be helping out, and he's Larsen's first choice for the job. "His chicks are sweet and we all dig sweet chicks," Larsen said. And what of Nova's old teammates, the New Warriors? "I'd like to pull in Namorita and Speedball," he said. "But I don't want it to become *New Warriors*. It's Nova's book." ■ **JIM McLAUCHLIN**

BRITISH INVASION or IAN CHURCHILL, INTERNATIONAL MAN OF MYSTERY

English artist and 'Coven' creator Ian Churchill gets a taste of America. Think he likes it? Yeah, baby! Yeah!

Picture a scorching July afternoon in Los Angeles. I'm reclining in a floating chair, sipping a soda as the cool water of the swimming pool laps against my legs. Life doesn't get much better than this, and it's all because I draw comic books!

When you live in England, you dream of visiting America. The whole lifestyle and culture just looks so damn cool! So there I was in my studio in rainy old England one day when the phone rang. It was Rob Liefeld, my friend and publisher at Awesome Entertainment. He said, "Pack your bags! You fly to Chicago the day after tomorrow for the Wizard World convention!" And that wasn't all. Since the San Diego con was a month later, I was going to spend the month in California, culminating at San Diego. To say the least, I was excited! And so began Ian Churchill's Awesome American adventure...

I flew to Chicago and hastened to the hotel I was lodging at with fellow Englishman Mr. Richard Starkings (the 23rd most-powerful man in comics), the founder of Comicraft. We had a few beers and chilled out. The next day was the beginning of the *Wizard* convention.

The con was excellent in all areas! It was brimming with excitement, and huge lines of people...were waiting for me to sign their comics? Totally amazing! I felt like a *bona fide* celebrity! I was interviewed while I signed comics, had my photograph taken a million times and even got to sit in at the Awesome panel.

After "Wizard World," I flew to Los Angeles with Rob and his gorgeous wife, Joy. As we drove up to Rob's house, the garage door started to open all by itself. I thought this was cool, as I'd *never* seen an automatic garage door before! Rob and Joy, somehow, found this highly amusing. The next day when Rob and I went out for lunch, I had to ask what a "sub" was. Apparently, it happens to be a "submarine sandwich," another thing I'd never heard of before.

USA BOUND Can Ian be turned to the American way of life? Read on.

Rob's house is nothing short of incredible! The whole place is covered with comic paraphernalia and enlarged prints of his favorite pieces of artwork, plus every comic-related sculpture you can imagine. It was so distracting, I almost found it hard to do character redesigns for *The Coven*, my book about a group of supernatural adventurers who fight to maintain the balance between good and evil!

Later, Rob and I went on location with the cast and crew of "The Suburbans," a retro-'80s movie currently filming and being produced by Joy's sister, Leanna. I was introduced to Jennifer Love Hewitt and Ben Stiller, the lead actors. I have to confess, I had no idea who they were, but I was informed that they are both huge stars on the American side of the pond. As I understand it, the movie is due for release in 1999, so make sure to look out for it.

The set visit was soooo cool, and since I love going to the movies, we all went and saw countless films during my stay. The best thing was that the films that are currently showing in America won't be released in England for at least another six months—we're that far behind! So I got to tell my friends at home about films that they haven't ever *heard* of yet!

Oh, yes—something that people might not be aware of is that Rob Liefeld loves to cut hair. He cuts his own hair, he cuts his dog's hair and he's cut *Menace* artist Dan Fraga's hair. In my opinion, Rob

GONE HOLLYWOOD This Brit learned two things from his trip: he loves L.A. and that Rob Liefeld cuts his own hair!

SOUND BITES
"DUDE, I AM *SUCH* A CHILD OF '70S MARVEL!"
—*Brian Pulido on revamping Marvel characters in* Supernaturals *(Wizard #87, November 1998)*
THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

is a frustrated hairdresser! If he hadn't gotten into comics, I'm sure he'd have set up a salon in Santa Monica! But he's still—as we say in England—a genuine all round good bloke.

The following weekend we all went to the farmer's market in Santa Monica, which hosts what is reputed to be the largest outdoor karaoke venue in L.A. Dan Fraga and I both got very drunk, and eventually went on stage and rocked the place! I performed David Lee Roth's version of "Just a Gigolo" and Dan executed a stellar rendition of the New Kids on the Block's "Step By Step." The crowd loved us.

BEER IS GOOD A drunken Ian croons "Just a Gigolo" to an unsuspecting karaoke club audience.

Disneyland was next, as I spent the day with Starkings. Being a fellow Brit, we got on really well and spent the day lining up (in England we call it "queuing") for rides and talking about the differences we'd noticed between England and America. One of the things about American rest rooms I liked were the faucets that operate automatically when you put your hands under them. I'd never seen that in England before.

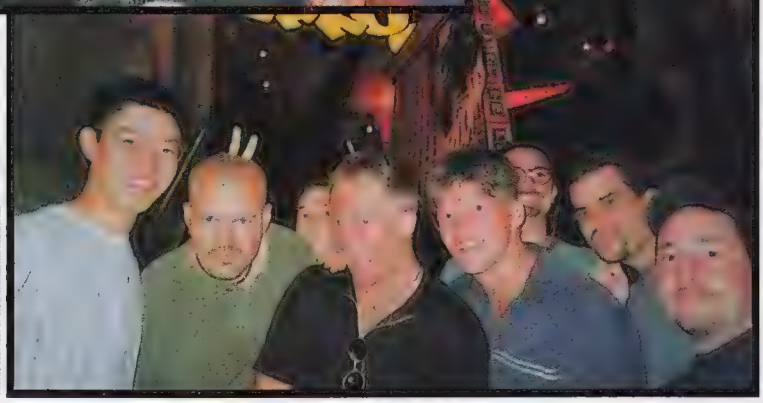
My last night in L.A., a group of us went to the Universal Citywalk, where we patronized the new "Marvel Mania" theme restaurant. The food was exceptional and the layout and service of a high standard. Rob was delighted to find the only comic on sale in the gift shop was a "Heroes Reborn" issue of *Captain America* he did! He bought three of them, and a Captain America action figure that he didn't have.

Finally, we headed off to San Diego. It was huge, and full of comic creators, science fiction actors and lingerie models all signing autographs and posing for photographs. *The Coven* seemed to be very popular within the show with fans and booth-holders alike, which was flattering and encouraging.

After the four-day marathon that was the San Diego con, I unfortunately had to return to jolly olde England. But I enjoyed Los Angeles so much that I'm planning to relocate to California sometime in 1999—everyone's just so friendly and accommodating that I can't resist the place. So watch out America—the *real* Austin Powers is coming atcha! Yeah baby! Yeah!

Ian Churchill, while British, claims no responsibility for the Teletubbies.

MARVEL MANIACS Ian had a blast at the Marvel Mania restaurant, joined by Rob Liefeld, his wife Joy (left) and the rest of Awesome crew (below).



PHOTOS COURTESY OF IAN CHURCHILL AND ROB LIEFELD

STONE
The HORROR
AVALON STUDIOS

SOUND BITES

"IT'S MY INTENTION TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN. EVERYBODY SEEMS TO WANT THIS. THE BIG QUESTION IS WHETHER THE POWERS-THAT-BE WILL LET ME."

—Erik Larsen on giving Wolvie back his adamantium (Wizard #87, November 1998)

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

LAST MAN STANDING

comic battles you never thought you'd see

BATMAN VS. WOLVERINE

THE COMBATANTS

TALE OF THE TAPE

6'2"	HEIGHT	5'3"
210 lbs.	WEIGHT	195 lbs.
74"	REACH	63"
Gotham, USA	HOMETOWN	Some lab, Canada
Haunting	PAST	Confusing
GQ	COIF	*Dog Fancy*

His parents gunned down before him as a child, billionaire Bruce Wayne dedicated his life to fighting crime. Trained as a human weapon and armed with a utility-belt arsenal and the most analytical mind on Earth, Wayne now combats evil as the Batman.

A mutant with enhanced senses and a lightning-quick healing factor, the man known only as Logan took part in an experimental program known as "Weapon X," which gave him an adamantium-laced skeleton. That, combined with his retractable claws, turned him into a killing machine. Having severed ties from the agency that "made" him, Logan now protects humanity as the X-Men's Wolverine.

tha winnah... Narrowly avoiding Wolverine's assault, Batman counterattacks with blows that would fell a normal man...and succeeds only in fracturing his hand on Wolvie's skeleton. With Wolverine scoring light wounds on the elusive Dark Knight, Batman unloads his utility belt. Tear gas, flares, razor-tipped Batarangs...all find their mark, but Logan's healing factor fights them off so all they do is slow him down. Cursing the fact that he doesn't know more about his foe and thus cannot exploit some weakness—the Batman's specialty—the Dark Knight rains punishing blows with surgical precision upon Wolverine to incapacitate, but not kill, him. Slipping into a berserker frenzy, Wolverine—his healing factor shaking off the last of the effects of the gasses and fatigue—unleashes close to 100 years' worth of experience in combat on the weakening Dark Knight, going for the kill, NOT just the victory. With Batman realizing at the end just what kind of creature he's up against, it's Wolverine who would claim what few men could: a victory over the Dark Knight Detective.

this month's battle drawn by MIKE WIERINGO

We Are T

'Wizard' travels the globe to look at the state of comics in other countries

Just like jazz, roller derby and "Baywatch," comics are an original American art form. And ya know what? They've made their way around the world. Take a look and see:

UNITED KINGDOM The Brits love Vertigo! DC Comics' Vertigo paperbacks are strong worldwide, especially in the U.K. where Titan Books licenses their publication.

THE NETHERLANDS Top Cow's *Witchblade* and *The Darkness* kick butt as the two top-selling titles for the Dutch audience, selling around 40,000 copies each, roughly half of what it sells in the much larger American market. *X-Mannen* and *X-Mannen Special* (figger it out yourself) are right behind them. But DC books? Not here. They were canceled in The Netherlands due to poor sales.

CANADA As you might imagine, *Alpha Flight*, Marvel's book about a Canadian superteam, sells well in the Great White North. About 10,000 copies a month sell in Canada, roughly the same number as are sold in the larger U.S. market. There's even a huge *AF* fan club called the Alpha Waves. (We wonder if the book's impending cancellation will incite riots or something.)

GERMANY D'oh! "The Simpsons" TV show is a huge hit in Germany and *The Simpsons* comic is Germany's top seller. Readers buy around 100,000 copies a month, about *10 times* what it does in the U.S.!

MEXICO ¡*Viva* Ian Churchill! Churchill's *The Coven* sells about 10,000 copies a month in Mexico, about one-third what it does in the U.S. That's a pretty good number for the Mexican market.

NEW JERSEY New Jersey? Yep. Stores here report that *Clerks* and *Jay and Silent Bob*, featuring Jersey-based characters from director Kevin Smith's movies, sell like gangbusters. They're local heroes, and approach *X-Men* numbers in many Jersey stores.

FRANCE Those wacky French! *Serval* (a small, fierce animal that lives in the woods, kind of like a French version of a wolverine) was the title of the French-translated *Wolverine*. But sales were blah. So Marvel Italia, the company that distributes in France, changed the title to the English *Wolverine*. Sales skyrocketed by 40 percent!

BRAZIL Brazil is considered to be the richest market for American comics outside the U.S. *Spawn* is a top-selling title here, and sales on the title shot up 30 percent after the Brazilian release of the "Spawn" movie.

ANTARCTICA Antarctica is filled with ice, penguins, ice, the South Pole and more ice. No comics here. Go North.

Spanning the Globe

MARVEL COMICS–Available in 27 languages and present in almost 100 countries.

DC COMICS–Available in approximately 30 languages in more than 60 countries.

'SPAWN' AND 'CURSE OF THE SPAWN'–Available in 17 languages in 70 countries.

'WITCHBLADE' AND 'THE DARKNESS'–Published in six languages, for distribution in 55 countries.

WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS–Published in eight languages for distribution in 26 countries.

'THE COVEN'–Shows up in six languages and available in 47 countries.

'BONE'–Available in 13 languages, the Bone Cousins are makin' mirth in more than 30 countries.

he World

By Jim McLauchlin and Lars Pearson

FINLAND *Bone* remains *Bone* in 12 different languages. But in Finland, the title is *Lupäät*, Finnish for "bonehead." We don't make this stuff up.

RUSSIA *Batman* and *Superman* are now published in Russian for Russia and the 20 or so former Soviet Republics. *Bozhe moi!*

JAPAN Literally 99 percent of comics in Japan are of Japanese origin. But DC has finally hit Japan's shores. The manga maniacs seem to go for the classics: Collected editions of *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, *Kingdom Come* and *Sandman*. These are all new to Japan, so sales are still low by both Japanese and American standards... but growing.

NORWAY Crom's devils! One-half of *all* worldwide *Conan* comic sales happen in tiny Norway, where the Cimmerian barbarian is found in weekly and monthly editions, plus hardcover collections! The only other American titles Norway seems to like? *Spawn* and *Sandman*.

ITALY Japanese title *Alita* (known as *Battle Angel Alita* in the U.S.) is neck-and-neck in the battle to be Italy's top-selling comic. Its competition? *Spider-Man*, or *Uomo Ragno*, as he's known in the Italian language.

GREECE Dark Horse's *300* focuses on a battle from ancient Greek history near and dear to the hearts of Greeks. The publisher set to release the book in Greece was a bit timid about publishing such sensitive material in the country, but upon reading it, fell in love with the story. *300* will be published in Greece in 1999, and it's expected to be a huge hit.

HONG KONG It's now part of the People's Republic of China–and the people love *Storm Raider*, a comic from mainland China featuring a demigod able to command storms. As for the latest American splash, Michael Turner's *Fathom* has hit like a tidal wave in the few shops that carry American comics.

MALAYSIA Well-known comics such as *Batman*, *Bone* and *Judge Dredd* are chopped up and published in daily newspapers in Malaysia.

SOUTH AFRICA It's only been six years since the first comic store opened in South Africa, so fandom there is still building. Currently making waves? Top Cow's *Fathom*.

AUSTRALIA *Mad* and the many *Mad* books are hits with comic readers down under. But watch out with the "mature readers" Vertigo stuff: Many comic shipments get sent back by Australian customs officials due to adult content.

FIRST LOOK

DAWN II

Joesph Michael Linsner conjures up a new Dawn—and this time, she's taking center stage

"You want Dawn? You got her," Joseph Michael Linsner says. "I'm putting her out there front and center."

After the highly successful 1995-1996 *Dawn: Lucifer's Halo* mini-series, Linsner is bringing his girl back in *Dawn II: The Return of the Goddess*, a four-issue mini-series starting in April. And although he says he doesn't want to "keep a 'Godzilla'-like veil of secrecy" over the new series, Linsner does want to maintain some mystery about what his goddess of birth and rebirth will be doing.

One thing is known for sure, though: Dawn will take a *very* active part in the story, a departure from *Lucifer's Halo*, where a character named Darrian Ashoka was the focal point. "I don't think Darrian will be around at all," Linsner says. "The only previous characters who will pop up are the 'celestial' ones like God and Death."

Death definitely plays a part, as a major witch-hunt is on at the story's beginning. With only a few witches left, one young girl offers her soul to the pagan Earth mother in exchange for revenge on the witch hunters. Dawn responds to the young girl's sacrifice and vows to discover just who's behind the witch genocide.

Oddly enough, Linsner's actually got the background for this tale. "I found myself involved with a number of women over the years who identifiied themselves as Witches," he says. "Although I don't subscribe to paganism or Wicca specificially, the ideas behind it make a lot of sense to me."

But what about the bad guys? Well, it looks like they're a bunch of bad *guys*. "A lot of the story is inspired by the fact that patriarchal, or 'father'-based religions, drove out the 'mother' religions," Linsner says. "Well, Dawn *is* the mother. The Goddess is back—and she wants revenge."

It's all part of putting the title character in a title-worthy role, something many fans are craving. Linsner promises a vengeful goddess who's much more physical, and much more up-close-and-personal. "Dawn will draw blood," claims Linsner. He also promises a definition of what Dawn can and cannot do. "If you look at [*Lucifer's Halo*], you'll see her doing a lot of fantastic things which are never clearly defined," Linsner says. "This time, I'm going to define them."

Dawn II currently occupies Linsner's time. But come new millennium, he's got a certain dream job in mind. "I have an excellent idea for a Batman project," he says. "But those guys at DC have my number and they haven't called me…yet."

Jim McLauchlin, the god of donuts, has an excellent idea for a new cruller. But those guys at Dunkin' haven't called him…yet.

BY JIM McLAUCHLIN

RED DAWN The hair's the same, but Dawn's getting new duds and a new attitude this April.

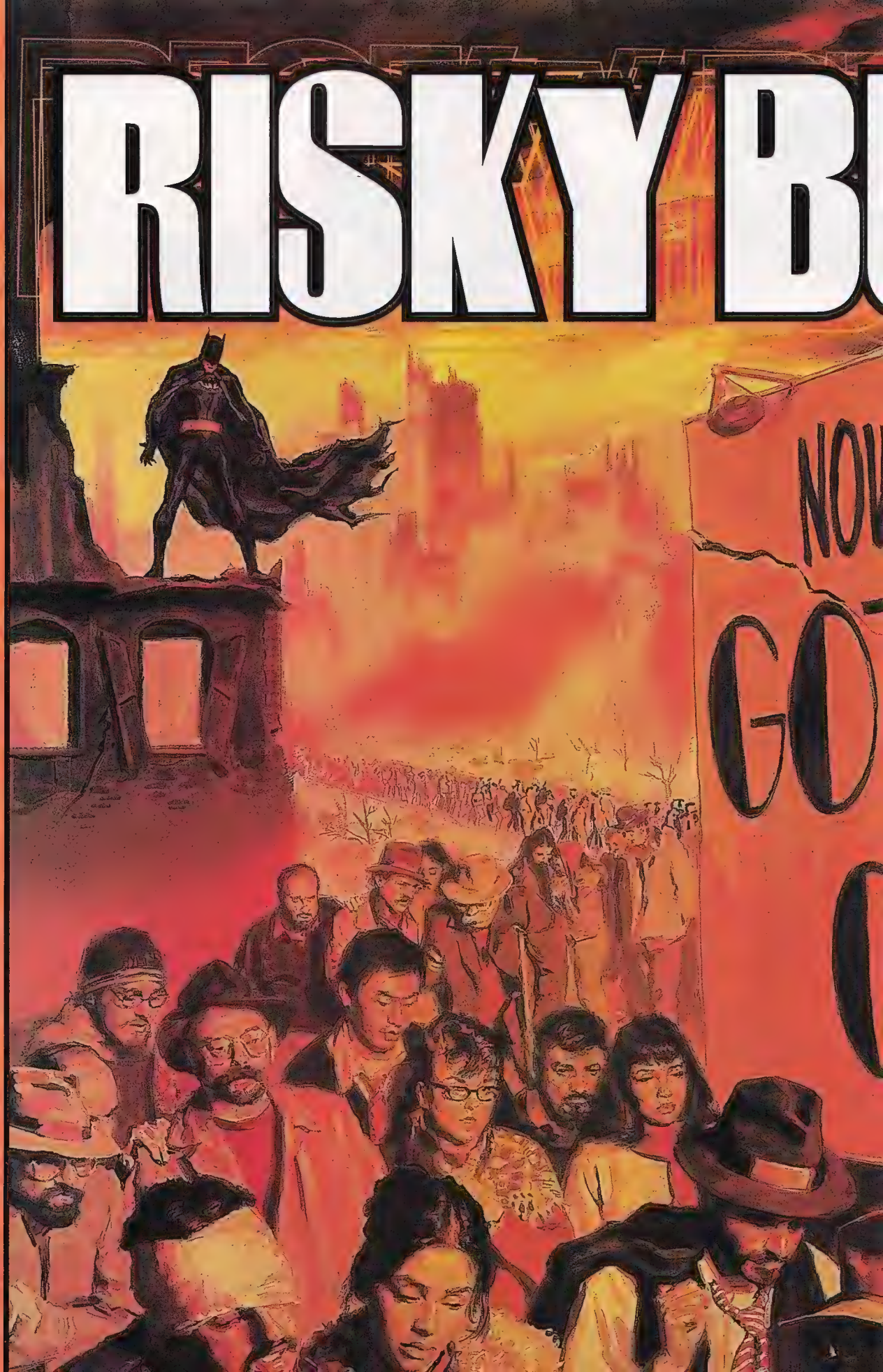
VITAL STATS

WHO?
Call her Mother Earth, call her Mary, call her Isis or call her Gaia–she's Dawn, the goddess of birth and the spirit of all that lives.

WHAT?
Dawn II: The Return of the Goddess, a new four-issue mini-series debuting in April from Sirius Entertainment written, penciled, inked, painted and lettered by Joseph Michael Linsner.

WHEN?
April 1999

WHAT'S THE DEAL?
Dawn gets active! No longer just a background player in her own title, the goddess finally takes center stage by investigating a series of witch murders.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USINESS

BYE-BYE? With Gotham City in ruins, its citizens are fleeing. But will Bat-fans stick around to see how this story ends?

No Gotham City. A new Dark Knight. A revamped creative team. Is DC Comics risking Batman's future with the year-long 'No Man's Land' storyline?

DON'T PLAN ON VISITING GOTHAM CITY ANYTIME NEXT YEAR. CHANCES ARE YOU WON'T EVEN GET IN.

The U.S. government has given up on the earthquake-devastated city, refusing it federal aid and cutting it off from the rest of the country by destroying all its bridges. Arkham Asylum's villains roam the streets. And Gotham's chief protector and ever-vigilant crime fighter, Batman, has disappeared.

No this isn't the latest Batman "Elseworlds" story. Nor is it a dream. This one's real, and it's about to get a heckuva lot worse. After almost a year of Gotham City trying to crawl out from the destruction of the "Cataclysm" earthquake, Batman Group Editor Dennis O'Neil and Associate Editor Jordan Gorfinkel are upping the ante this January, for better or worse, with the year-long storyline titled "No Man's Land." Some way to celebrate the Dark Knight's 60th anniversary, huh?

"We're still not sure we can pull this off," O'Neil says. "We know how it's going to end, but we don't know how we are going to get there. It's possible there is a hole right in the middle of this that none of us are seeing. We could really fall on our faces."

It's a risk for sure, one to certainly garner a lot of attention. But what initially brought about the most ambitious Bat-storyline since 1993's "Knightfall," which temporarily replaced Batman with a blood-thirsty vigilante? Quite simply, boredom. About a year ago, the Bat editors realized they were becoming a bit too comfortable with the Dark Knight. After all, bored editors and writers usually translate into bored readers. So before O'Neil knew it, Gorfinkel walked into his office one Monday morning with a 12-page proposal, describing the "stunt," as O'Neil likes to call it. Gorfinkel expected him to hate it, but O'Neil, knowing the whole thing would be a gamble, was sold.

"It seemed like a big dangerous story to try," he says. "It's a story that had never been told, as far as I know, certainly not in comics. That's always a reason to do something."

BY JAMES A. MORRISARD

GOODFELLAS

Since Gotham City's in chaos thanks to "No Man's Land," *Wizard* put together a quick scorecard to keep tabs on your favorite Bat-heroes.

BATMAN

After ordering Robin, Nightwing and the other heroes to clear out of Gotham, Batman disappears for three months. When he returns, Batman will use new techniques and learn a whole new set of rules. "He will be sorely tested in 'No Man's Land' and lose some of his arrogant cockiness," Batman Group Editor Dennis O'Neil says.

BATGIRL

She's back! It's been 10 years since her death in *Batman: The Killing Joke*, but an all-new Batgirl is coming to Gotham. Who she is, however, is a big mystery. And DC ain't talking. Don't be surprised if her first appearance is in the opening story arc.

ROBIN

Tim Drake and his dad move to Keystone City, where Robin will team up with The Flash and do everything he can to convince his father that Keystone isn't the place. He'll eventually return to Gotham.

NIGHTWING

"Nightwing will have more reason to play the hero in Blüdhaven because the city's population doubles when Gotham's refugees move in," explains *Nightwing* writer Chuck Dixon.

ORACLE

Safe in the territory protected by Gordon and the Gotham City Police, Barbara Gordon will serve as the chronicler, documenting the events during "No Man's Land." However, Black Mask targets Bruce Wayne's buildings for destruction, one of which is Oracle's fortress.

COMMISSIONER GORDON

Since he relied way too heavily on a vigilante to fight crime, Gordon's a laughing stock. "Gordon figures that if he can bring some form of order to this insanity, it's going to prove that he is a good cop and a righteous man," screenwriter Bob Gale says.

ALFRED

With Wayne Manor in pieces, the big question is where Batman's loyal and devoted butler has been during the Dark Knight's absence. You'll find out in the first story arc but it's not what anyone will expect, the Bat-editors say.

HUNTRESS

Always the black sheep of the bunch, the Huntress disobeys Batman and stays to fight in Gotham. She'll run into the Scarecrow, while protecting a priest-run refugee camp from him.

AZRAEL

The bad blood between Azrael and Batman will finally come to an end when Az proves himself worthy by handling problems outside Gotham City, primarily taking down businessman Nicholas Scratch. ■ JM

GOTHAM CITY HASN'T HIT ROCK BOTTOM YET.

Currently, the stage is being set in "Road to No Man's Land," a prologue running through *Batman*, *Detective Comics* and *Batman: Shadow of the Bat*. By year's end, millionaire Bruce Wayne will have failed to convince Congress to save Gotham. A new villain, businessman Nicholas Scratch, will have undermined Wayne and begun his own plans for Gotham. "No Man's Land" opens three months after Black Monday, the day Gotham's bridges were blown up, physically cutting it off from civilization. Arkham's psychotic villains are loose. Commissioner Gordon and the remaining Gotham City Police

IN HIDING Batman's been MIA for three months at the opening of "No Man's Land."

Department (GCPD) have carved the city into zones, and a war has begun for control. Oh yeah, and Batman? Well, no one's seen him for three months. In short, Gotham's a mess.

"'No Man's Land' is sort of a thematic throwback to 'Year One' in that Batman, and really all the people in the city, have to go back to the basics," says private eye novelist Greg Rucka who's contributing a story arc to "No Man's Land." "Batman has no cave, no utility belt and no computer. He is really fighting the way he was trained to."

"This is a new status quo in the Batman books that will be an aspect of all the stories in the course of the year," Gorfinkel explains. And he's not just talking about characters. "No Man's Land" is far from your typical multi-part crossover. Instead, it's a "backstory" with numerous story arcs, each concerning a different Bat character. All the arcs run weekly through *Batman*, *Detective*, *Shadow* and even the former out-of-continuity *Legends of the Dark Knight*, which will give O'Neil and Gorfinkel the convenience of a fourth monthly title. Each story arc, written and drawn by a different creative team, continues week to week. When one arc finishes, a new team jumps on board. *Nightwing*, *Robin*, *Azrael* and *Catwoman* will deal with the fallout from Gotham City, and at a

SOUND BITES

"AS A CREATOR, I HAVE TO DO WHAT I THINK IS RIGHT WITH THE BOOK. I CAN'T BE DICTATED TO BY THE AUDIENCE."
—*Ron Marz*, Green Lantern *writer in response to a fan club's wish to resurrect former GL Hal Jordan* (Wizard *#82, June 1998*)

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

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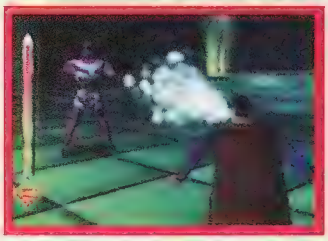

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THE BAD SEEDS

Wanna know what your favorite villains are up to in Gotham City during the mega, year-long "No Man's Land" story arc? Well, here's a quick rundown for you folks keeping score.

JOKER

According to DC Associate Editor Jordan Gorfinkel, the Joker will hang over Gotham like a specter. With the exception of a few sightings, the Joker will hide out in Gotham's shadows and won't make his presence known for quite some time.

HARLEY QUINN

Mr. J's beloved sidekick joins the Bat-Universe when the Joker makes his grand entrance. Writer Paul Dini is working on an imaginative way to bring her into the Bat continuity without straying from the "Batman" animated series' origin. "I don't want to get too far away from the idea that she's a therapist at Arkham who has a thing for the Joker," he says.

CATWOMAN

With nothing left to steal in Gotham, Catwoman moves to New York. But don't worry, she'll be back. "She'll realize that she has underestimated her connection to Gotham, and does end up going home to Gotham," *Catwoman* writer Devin Grayson says.

RIDDLER

After being freed from Arkham Asylum along with everyone else, the Riddler hightails it out of Gotham. Look for him to wreak havoc for Impulse and then it's off to Hollywood in an issue of *The Batman Chronicles*.

BANE

The man who broke the Bat will be on the outside when Gotham's bridges are blown up. Bane wants nothing more than to be right in the middle of the chaos and will do everything he can to fight his way in.

TWO-FACE

While Two-Face plays a very significant role, possibly involving Gotham City Detective Montoya, no one in the Bat-camp is saying anything more.

MR. FREEZE

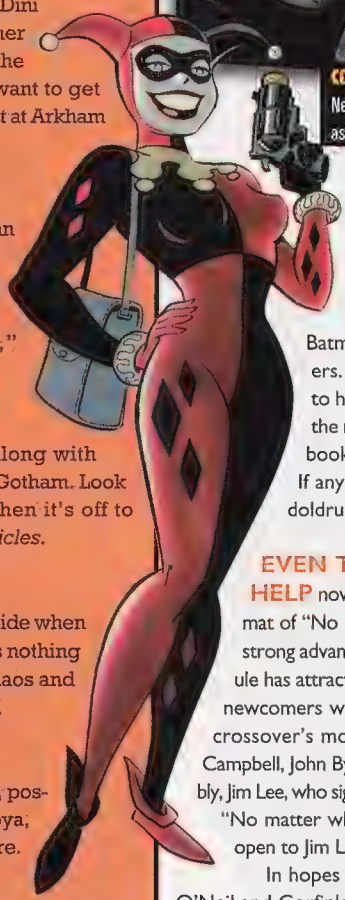
The brilliant scientist stakes his claim at Gotham City's power plant, which'll give him the power to stay cold and something to trade as well.

PENGUIN

The Penguin will be a key player in the war for Gotham, controlling what little goods and equipment are left in the city.

SCARECROW

The current state of affairs in Gotham will be a dream come true for the Scarecrow, but first he'll have to contend with the Huntress. ■ JM



COMING AND GOING As Catwoman (above) leaves for New York, Harley Quinn (left) makes her DC Universe debut as Joker's sidekick.

certain point, cross over with the main story.

This latest Bat-stunt may seem like nothing more than an attempt to boost sales. But the Batman books have weathered the industry-wide sales loss better than others, Gorfinkel says. The risk is necessary if DC wants to keep Batman fresh and interesting for new and old readers. "Batman thrives on change and it has been key to his success," Gorfinkel says. "Batman is arguably the most powerful and important character in comic books, certainly the most well known in the world. If any one character can lift this industry out of the doldrums, it's Batman."

EVEN THE DARK KNIGHT NEEDS SOME HELP now and then, though. And thanks to the unique format of "No Man's Land," the editors (and Batman) have one strong advantage. The new story direction and weekly schedule has attracted a wide array of talented comics veterans and newcomers who could never meet the demands of a typical crossover's monthly schedule. A few names include J. Scott Campbell, John Byrne, Larry Hama, Brian Bolland and, quite possibly, Jim Lee, who signed an exclusive deal with DC Comics in October. "No matter what his relationship with DC is, we're definitely open to Jim Lee making a contribution," Gorfinkel says.

In hopes to breathe new life into the Caped Crusader, O'Neil and Gorfinkel have brought on board a handful of writers from other mediums, most of whom have had limited experience writing comics. The whole shebang kicks off with the 38-page *No Man's Land* #1 featuring an Alex Ross-painted lenticular cover. Then "No Man's Land" really takes off with a four-part story written by Hollywood screenwriter Bob Gale ("Back to the Future"), with art by Alex Maleev (*The Crow: Dead Time*) and Wayne Faucher (*Shadow of the Bat*).

"[The Batman editors wanted] to bring in some people who weren't the usual suspects and try to get some new energy going," Gale, a longtime Batman fan who knew O'Neil from way back, explains. Earlier this year, Gale was invited to the annual Bat-summit where he helped editors and writers hammer out the details for "No Man's Land." Gale

SOUND BITES

"IN A LOT OF CASES, I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE CHANGES UNTIL THE LAST SECOND."
—Grant Morrison, JLA writer, on the pressures of writing a book featuring team members who have their own other books (Wizard #82, June 1998)

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

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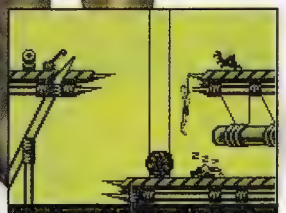

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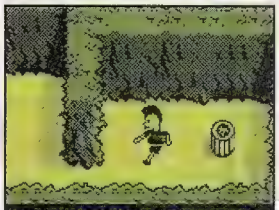

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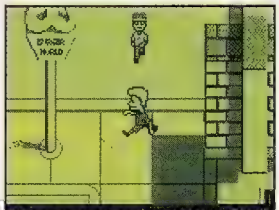

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THE JLA IS MIA

You'd think an earthquake destroying a major city like Gotham and the United States government cutting it off from the rest of the civilized world would attract the Justice League of America's attention. After all, the world's greatest superheroes helped out Montevideo, Uruguay, when a nuclear warhead struck it in *DC One Million*. So wouldn't they help out one of their own charter members? Don't count on it.

"This is one of those things that Batman will deal with on his own," *JLA* writer Grant Morrison says. "The Justice League is just so powerful, in reality they could come in and fix up any of these problems within a couple of hours. I think that's the reason behind it. It's not necessarily the way I would think about it or the way I do it, but that's how it will be played. We'll just work around it and not make a big deal out of it."

Thanks to a little continuity fudging, Batman will be appearing regularly in *JLA*, even though he'll be busy trying to save Gotham. But before you start writing that eight-page letter to DC Comics, complaining about the importance of continuity, DC Associate Editor Jordan Gorfinkel says the JLA's absence will be explained.

"We have been asked on many occasions, how come the JLA with all their fancy superheroes don't come to Gotham during 'Contagion' or 'Cataclysm' and just magically solve all the problems," Gorfinkel says. "We will be addressing that very early on in our *No Man's Land: World's Finest* one-shot story."

Also be on the lookout for a one-shot "No Man's Land" story by Chuck Dixon (*Nightwing*, *Robin*) starring the members of Young Justice. While the JLA knows enough to listen to Batman, it seems the kids just can't say no. Superboy and Impulse ignore Batman's order to stay out of Gotham, and end up putting Robin smack between a rock and a hard place. ■ JM

impressed the editors so much, a few weeks later, he received a phone call from them, begging him to write the first story arc. "They did a real good job of groveling and I figured I had nothing to lose."

Besides Gale, "No Man's Land" has attracted television writer Lisa Klink ("Star Trek: Voyager" and "Hercules: The Legendary Journeys"), "The New Adventures of Superman/Batman" producer Paul Dini and the previously mentioned Rucka (*Finder* and *Keeper*), who was more than willing to write a Batman story. "Are you kidding me? Batman's the ultimate private eye. Why don't you ask me if I want a million bucks?" exclaims Rucka, who's writing the third story arc featuring the villain Black Mask, with art by Frank Teran. Rounding out the first three months of story arcs will be a Penguin story in February by Ian Edgington (*Terminator*) and D'Israeli (*Sandman*), and a story spotlighting the Huntress and Scarecrow by writer Devin Grayson, Dale Eaglesham and Batt. After that, O'Neil and Gorfinkel are still lining up creative teams to finish out the year, with Gale possibly writing the conclusion.

"The editors are really trying to do something new, to redefine Batman and his role in Gotham City, and to sort of reinvent the characters as they do periodically," Dini says. "They want to take what was, and still continues to be wonderful and exciting about Batman, and just redefine that to tell a great story."

Besides writing the story arc featuring the Joker, Dini will finally get to introduce Harley Quinn, the popular character from the animated television series, into the DC Universe. But Harley's not the only new character to

GIRL POWER The new Batgirl debuts in the opening arc with a new look. Who is she? Expect it to be hot debate in '99.

SOUND BITES THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"I BECAME ABSOLUTELY FASCINATED BY THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DICK GRAYSON AND BRUCE WAYNE."
—*Devin Grayson, Catwoman writer, on first seeing a "Batman" cartoon and being inspired to write comics. (Wizard #88, December 1998)*

grow out of "No Man's Land." Fans will also get to see the all-new Batgirl. Details of her origin and identity are being closely guarded by everyone in the Bat-camp. Don't be surprised if her identity isn't revealed at all during the entire crossover and the months to follow.

ACQUIRING NEW READERS seems to be the push behind "No Man's Land." There's new characters, creative teams and story-

"WE'RE STILL NOT SURE WE CAN PULL THIS OFF. WE COULD REALLY FALL ON OUR FACES." **–DENNY O'NEIL, BAT-EDITOR**

lines, but what of the old? With any big change, there's always a gamble involved. "No Man's Land" could be the last straw with loyal and devoted fans who have grown weary of all the Bat crossovers in recent years and just want O'Neil and company to stop messing around with the Dark Knight. Personally, Gorfinkel understands their concerns.

"We are very aware of the vocal minority—and they are very vocal—who want us to leave well enough alone. These are the same people who wanted Hal Jordan to remain Green Lantern," he says. "I don't say this disparagingly because I'm one of them. I have a terrible fear of change, but I see that the comic book industry at large needs some shaking up, and the only character that can do that is Batman." In hopes to satisfy loyal fans, look for a series of special one-shots featuring Batman in classic adventures before the events in "Cataclysm."

Fans aren't the only ones who feel the latest crossover is a big mistake. "I didn't think it was a good story and didn't want to write it," says writer Doug Moench, who negotiated out of his contract so he won't have to write the three-part "Road to No Man's Land" arc in *Shadow of the Bat*. "I thought it was absurd that the U.S. government would deliberately cut Gotham off from the rest of the country. I also thought the three issues of Bruce Wayne arguing before Congress was essentially boring."

The other two current Bat writers, Alan Grant and Chuck Dixon, will finish up their duties for the Batman titles at the end of "Road to No Man's Land," and then make room for the new blood. They won't be leaving the Bat-camp for good, though. Dixon will continue to pen *Nightwing* and *Robin*, while Grant takes on the upcoming *Anarky* monthly series. No decision has been made as to who will be taking over the writing duties on the core Bat titles after "No Man's Land." For now, they're just trying to get through the next year.

"We are trying to tell one hell of a story here," says O'Neil who is considering relaunching the Batman books at the turn of the century. But as to the fate of Gotham City and Batman after "No Man's Land," even he's not sure.

"I have no idea how we are going to handle that. I haven't figured out a dramatic reason why, if they rebuild Gotham, they would rebuild that horrible and depressing place," O'Neil jokes. "On the other hand, Batman sort of needs that horrible and depressing place."

And he's got it, at least for another year.

Maryland-based writer James Morrisard wonders just when the hell Captain James T. Kirk will be showing up in "No Man's Land." After all, he was always going "where no man has gone before."

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THE WIZARD Q&A

BY TOM RUSSO • PHOTOS BY GABE PALACIO

Avi Arad isn't wearing a suit.

Wearing one—*being* one—isn't what he's about, he insists. Nope, his preference is to go creatively casual: black "Fifth Element" T-shirt, black jeans, silver Spider-Man pinky ring, black denim jacket slung over the back of his leather office chair. And considering this is the man poised on this September afternoon to become Marvel's new corporate overseer, that's probably a good thing. As comic fans the world over are painfully aware, the last thing Marvel needs right now is another "suit" mucking up the works.

Arad's journey to this crossroads has been as bizarrely convoluted as Marvel's own two-year struggle to slog through bankruptcy hell—in large part because the two stories are so closely intertwined. As the head of Toy Biz, the action-figure manufacturer that holds the Marvel toy license, Arad has done business with Marvel since the late '80s. In fact, he did double duty as the president of Marvel's movie and animation division for much of that time, spearheading the launch of shows such as "X-Men" and "Spider-Man." That is, until he was fired from his Hollywood post in October of '97 in a dispute resulting from Marvel's bankruptcy wranglings with Toy Biz. But now, with Toy Biz's recent successful bid to buy out its partner in this little love-hate relationship, Arad is back on the Marvel scene, more involved than ever. (*Told* you it was a convoluted story.)

Born in the Mediterranean and raised in Israel, Arad has a vaguely exotic look and manner about him that's so enigmatically low-key, you can't help wondering if there isn't some caged lion lurking somewhere inside him—the kind that shows itself in a boardroom, growls and roars a few times, and gets problems solved in a big hurry. But again, a visitor to Arad's toy-filled Manhattan office sees none of that. The picture that does emerge is of a company cheerleader after Stan Lee's own heart, as Arad, speaking distinctively accented English, enthusiastically forecasts Marvel's turnaround from sky-is-falling to blue-skies-ahead. And how exactly does he intend to help Marvel dig out from under its mess? Here, this dressed-down Man With the Plan talks strategy with *Wizard*.

AVI arad

As Marvel's newest boss, **AVI ARAD** reveals plans for an Avengers cartoon, Fantastic Four and X-Men films and tells why Star-Lord could be Marvel's 'Star Wars'

nd

VITAL STATS

NAME: Avi Arad
OCCUPATION: President of Toy Biz, which owns Marvel Enterprises
BORN: Cyprus, September 8, 1947; grew up in Israel; emigrated to the United States in 1970
BASE OF OPERATIONS: New York and Los Angeles
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Helped introduce the X-Men and other key elements of the Marvel Universe to the mainstream through Toy Biz lines he developed; accomplished the same on the animation front by overseeing the launch of Marvel cartoons such as "X-Men," "Spider-Man" and "Silver Surfer."
WHY THE "X-MEN" CARTOON WAS A SURPRISINGLY TOUGH SELL: "We decided to start with the X-Men because it was [the Marvel property] best known to us but least known to the world. And [TV] people looked at me like I was nuts. I remember going on the road trying to book the show, and people didn't know the X-Men from a hole in the wall."

WIZARD: Give us an overview of how and why Toy Biz made this move to acquire Marvel.

ARAD: The idea was to take Marvel and Toy Biz and [Marvel subsidiaries] Fleer and Panini [a trading card and sticker manufacturer, respectively] and unite them into a cohesive organization that has this synergy: The books create the characters which create the shows which create the video games, and so on. It's like cross-fertilization. So the deal made sense. And I think the companies belong together. Even before we were united, Toy Biz was good for Marvel, Marvel was good for Toy Biz. Being united gives us even bigger opportunities to exploit this universe together, to go deeper and look at [characters] that are not that obvious to the world and put them out there where they deserve to be.

And what will your new official title be ?

I may have *no* title. [*Smiles*] I don't get involved in organizational charts. I have no interest in that. But I am a major stockholder and a director of the company, so I'm going to affect the destiny of the company with or without a specific title. What I'd like to do is give the company its creative direction—help with animation, help with the movies, help create toys. That's what I do for a living. And with my investment here, I'll do anything I have to do in *any* division to make sure that things go well [*Laughs*].

On the publishing side of things, will you be making any major changes? Cutting any titles? Shaking up the staff?

I don't want to say I have bigger fish to fry—because the comics are a pretty big fish—but there are more [pressing] issues that require my attention at this point than analyzing the comics.

But I think the comics are looking very good these days. [Marvel Editor-in-Chief] Bob [Harras] is doing a terrific job. Practically everybody Marvel wants to work with is working with them. Bob has a unique ability to work with anybody and everybody—no egos involved. So I'm very happy with what I see.

How do you feel about deals like Heroes Reborn or Marvel Knights, where Marvel's characters are essentially loaned out to independent creators?

Well, it's not like [Marvel simply says], "I'll tell you what—come in and do this [run] of books, and we'll give you X number of dollars." I believe that all these deals are born out of an artist saying to an editor, "You know, I like to do this character, I like to do that character, but I've *always* wanted to work on *Daredevil*. How do we do it?" To accommodate that type of deal is very smart, because it's not an assignment, it's a passion, and you get good work that way. So I'm all for it.

Any Marvel characters you've got a particular passion for?

I like the X-Men, and the whole idea of very cleverly doing this study of humanity and discrimination through mutants. I also like Daredevil, because his story is such a personal victory—a blind man not only overcoming a physical handicap, but fighting for justice without vengeance. Losing his father could have made him an angry man forever, but that's not what he's about. On the other hand, I like the vigilante aspect of Ghost Rider, because we all have moments when we just feel like enough is enough! And even though most people have never heard of the character, I'm totally in love with Star-Lord. [*EDITOR'S NOTE: Star-Lord is a mid-'70s swashbuckling sci-fi hero.*] I look at that book and say, "Wow, now *that's* a world." People talk about the ["Star Wars"] trilogy and "pre-logy" and all that stuff—well, look at this, it's right here. I think a Star-Lord movie could be one of the biggest of all time once we got it together. Just the name says, "Wait a second, I want to see that!"

So how far back does the Toy Biz/Marvel relationship go? As a matter of fact, how far back does Toy Biz go?

Oh, I have a terrible memory for this stuff. Toy Biz was a Canadian company that went into bankruptcy and was bought out. They used to have the rights to Batman, but when the first movie [in 1989] sent Batman through the roof, Warner Bros. gave the license to Kenner. At the time, I was an inventor for all the toy companies—Mattel, Hasbro, Tyco, Galoob—and involved with animation for all of them. When I got together with Toy Biz, people looked at it as this company that was suddenly without Batman, but I said, "Wow, you're kidding—you've got this Marvel contract." We started with X-Men, and then Toy Biz and Marvel made this overall deal sometime in '93 [with Marvel acquiring a nearly 50 percent stake in Toy Biz]. I ceased dealing with the

SOUND BITES
"ONE OF THE THINGS I WANT TO DO IS REMIND FANS AND OURSELVES THAT THERE ARE OTHER CONCEPTS OUT THERE AS EXCITING AS THE X-MEN."
—*Bob Harras, Marvel Comics (Wizard #77, January 1998)*
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world [at large] and concentrated on Toy Biz and Marvel. And then we started the studio [Marvel Films, which later became Marvel Studios], and the rest is history.

How did you get into inventing toys? Did you come from an art background?

Engineering. After [college], I worked for this toy company called Aurora. Remember those racing sets? I did research and development. And I found I had a knack for it. It's a unique business—you have to be interested in technology and new materials, you have to be sensitive to kids' play patterns...it's a lot of fun.

The work I was doing [before Toy Biz] was mostly idea development and design. I would also get involved in manufacturing if my clients needed the help, and I'd definitely get involved in marketing. As for animation, my involvement was mainly on the idea end—story development and some design. So my experience is quite well-rounded. I can jump in at any of these phases—and I'm old enough to have mastered many [*Smiles*].

ASSEMBLERS Arad says his cartoon Avengers team would be made up of Ant-Man, Wasp, Vision, Scarlet Witch, Hawkeye and Falcon, reserving Cap, Thor and Iron Man for solo shows.

How involved are you with Marvel's animation and movie projects at this point?

After I was fired, I was totally uninvolved. The only involvement I had with the movies was social, staying in touch with the writers, directors, and so on. But I felt fairly confident that we would own Marvel. And as you can tell, not much happened [in the interim]. In fact, a lot of projects just disappeared. But I've been in L.A. a bunch of times over the last couple of months, and while I couldn't do anything official, there were things I could do to at least make sure we hit the ground running. We all wasted enough time with the bullsh-- of the bankruptcy. It's time to go do some business for a change.

Is there anything about the bankruptcy proceedings that's still barring Marvel from going back into production on cartoons such as "Silver Surfer"?

No, it's just a matter of figuring out where to show them. There are just so many hours a day on Fox Kids. It's all in negotiations.

What about the Captain America cartoon Marvel was developing? Has that been set aside for good?

No, no. Here, I'll show you what I'm working on right now. [*Arad sorts through some papers on his desk, producing a packet of character design sheets for the cartoon.*] We're playing around with different looks for it. So no, we are setting nothing aside. Given the choice, the next show we would do is "Captain America." We have a good grip on it creatively, so I think we can make it happen.

Any specific plans to do an Avengers cartoon?

It's something we're looking at. We actually have a bible for the show. And what we like most about the Avengers is that it's a group concept. It's much easier to do a television show that has group dynamics than a show like

SOUND BITES

"THOR CAN KICK DARNED NEAR ANYONE'S ASS."
—*Dan Jurgens, Thor writer (Wizard #80, April 1998)*

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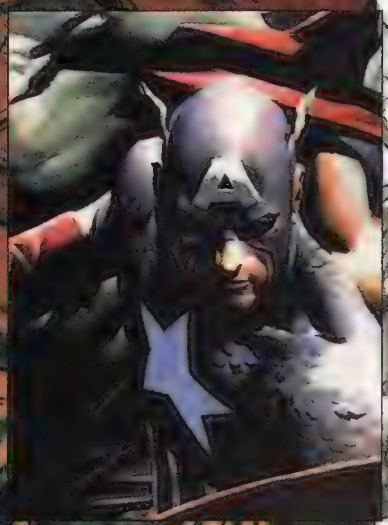
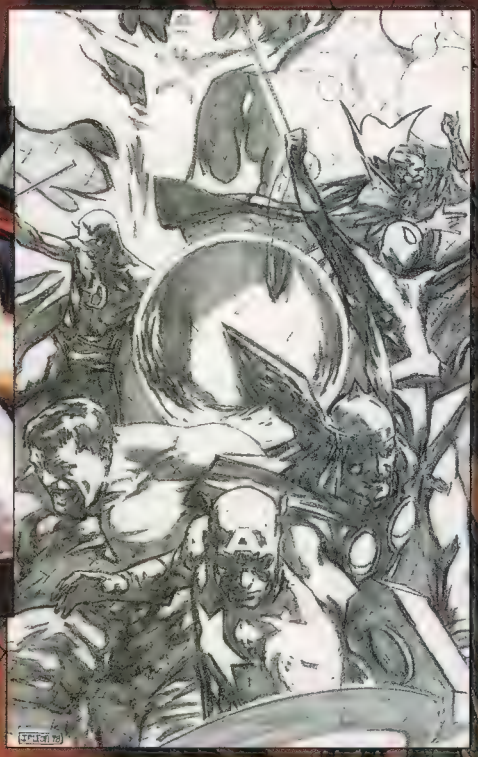


CLOSE UP DETAIL OF PAINTING IN PROGRESS BY ALEX ROSS



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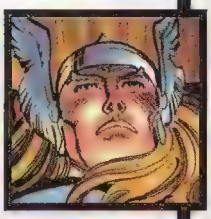
TOONING UP

When you quiz Avi Arad on his Marvel animation wish list, it's no great surprise that doing an Avengers cartoon ranks near the top. But after that, the calls are a bit tougher to make. "Captain America" is already on the drawing board, but what would Arad like to see after that?

THOR

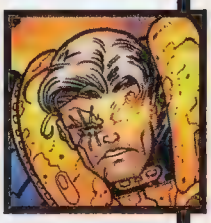


"When we get to it, it will probably be one of the greatest stories ever told. Just look at the number of realms in his universe. Between his being here [on Earth] and there [in Asgard and elsewhere], you need to start with 65 half-hours just to hit the tip of the iceberg of its potential."

NAMOR

"Once you do a show, you'd really have to treat these characters as people. What is their underwater world made up of? How do they relate? What's a working animal–a whale? What do they eat? Can Namor have sushi? I mean, think of all the questions that have to be dealt with to make a show like that. It's already interesting, and you haven't even started writing it yet."

THE EXPANDED X-UNIVERSE



"I think it's time for another great team concept, and there are sub-universes to X-Men that I'm dying to put on television. Cable would be a good one to look at. And X-Force, when its story was being taken deep into the future. Just give me time, give me networks and we'll go visit there." ■ TR

"Spider-Man." Look at "X-Men": a conflict here, a conflict there, and you fill up half an hour like that [*snaps his fingers*]. The Avengers aren't quite as complex as that, but they still have their personalities, their love affairs, their leadership [issues]. Also, it would be a great show for guest appearances, because as you know, everybody was a member of the Avengers at one time or another in this messy universe [*Laughs*].

Looking at the movie projects, what do you anticipate Marvel's follow-up to "Blade" will be?

I believe the plan is to do a "Blade" sequel, because it did so well. Of the others we have in various stages, "X-Men" and "The Fantastic Four" are farthest along in their development. We have a script on "Fantastic Four" that ["Batman" screenwriter] Sam Hamm wrote that created a lot of excitement at the studio.

Is "Home Alone" director Chris Columbus still on board to direct "FF"?

This might be one he produces [instead]. I think he has his eye on something else in our universe to direct, but we'll leave that under wraps for now.

Any late-breaking news on the legal battle over the Spider-Man movie rights?

We're getting there. It's in the courts now, and it's finally on its way to being resolved one way or another. For a long time, it was really in Never-Never Land. But there's a lot of energy behind it right now.

And I'll tell you, the calls and the pressure from studios wanting to make our product—it's like they all want to do it, they all understand it, they all get it now. "Blade" was an interesting door-opener. It definitely wasn't one of the low-hanging fruits—if anything, it was one of those fruits that you almost can't see in the tree—but it made things very clear [to people in Hollywood]. I promise you, within a very short period of time, you'll see this place rock and roll with movies.

And yet for all the success "Blade" has enjoyed, the Marvel name was conspicuously absent from much of the advertising—as though there was a fear that the association would hurt the movie.

It was an idiotic move—and you can put that in bold letters—not to put the Marvel name on "Blade." I have a feeling that someone at Marvel asked that the credit not be put on, and I think it was insane. You know, sometimes you have a hit, sometimes you have a miss, but the fact is, it's still a Marvel property, and we should be proud of it. We need to put our product out there.

It sounds like you've got a pretty fierce attachment to these characters.

Well, that's why we wanted this deal. Most of us here are into this universe. Come to our homes and you'll see the memorabilia and the posters. We want to have that piece of culture. To me, Marvel *is* a piece of culture. And as long as people respect it and have that passion for it, I think it's going to come out great. (W)

L.A.-based writer Tom Russo is the one person in Hollywood who doesn't claim to own the "Spider-Man" movie rights.

LOOKIN' SHARP Marvel's next movie? A "Blade" sequel, due to the first flick's success.

"BLADE" PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW LINE CINEMA.

SOUND BITES

"THIS IS *NOT* 'HEROES REBORN' ALL OVER AGAIN."
—*Shirrel Rhoades, Marvel Comics, about Marvel Knights (Wizard #81, May 1998)*

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SPEND A DAY WITH LIVING LEGEND STAN LEE AS HE PREACHES THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARVEL

Stan Lee needs to get one thing straight right off the bat. "So tell me," he says in a crisp, clear voice, the index finger of his left hand jutting right out at you, "how is this interview going to lift Mighty Marvel to even greater heights, and make our competition quiver and quake in fear? And you'd better have a good answer. Otherwise, I'm just not interested." Stan says this with a smile because...well, because he says *everything* with a smile. That's his job. Smiling and spreading the word about Marvel Comics has been Stan's job for 40 years. Stan has been the frontman for Marvel, doing—literally—thousands of TV and radio shows, thousands of college lectures and comic convention panels, and yes, thousands of magazine interviews. And at age 75, he still attacks each and every opportunity to preach the Marvel Gospel—this one included—as if it were his first.

STAN THE MAN Why is this man smiling? At age 75, the man behind Marvel simply loves his job.

CAPTAIN MARVEL

BY JIM McLAUCHLIN • PHOTOS BY JIM McHUGH

STRIP MINING Stan's still very much involved in the daily "Spider-Man" strip.

"It seems I have spent my life doing interviews," Stan says, still animated with arms flailing, sitting behind his desk in a corner office at Marvel's Los Angeles headquarters. "I should say that I'm sick of them, but I'm not. I really love talking about the work I do. I love talking comics. I love talking about entertainment."

And when Stan talks, people listen. He has a voice that doesn't command, but somehow compels. He's always just a little louder than anyone else in the room, but never annoying. He grabs your attention by sheer force of personality, with a smile and a gleam in his eye that even shines through his prescription Ray-Ban sunglasses.

But these are things not everyone knows. We've all seen Stan's *words* a million times. We all know the résumé: For more than a decade, Stan wrote and edited practically every book at Marvel and created such characters as Spider-Man, the Hulk and the Fantastic Four. But what is a day in the life of Stan Lee like? *Wizard* spent a day with Marvel's living legend in the hopes we might learn a little more about the man that helped build Marvel into the No. 1 comics company in the country.

ON THE OUTSIDE, STAN LEE LOOKS DECEPTIVELY LAID BACK IN A DENIM SHIRT, khaki pants and New Balance sneakers. But underneath, he's a ball of fire. He's lean, he's fit, and he looks 20 years younger than he actually is. As he moves around the office, he leaves others in his dust. And as Marvel's Grand Old Man, Stan does only the work he chooses to do. But he chooses to do a lot.

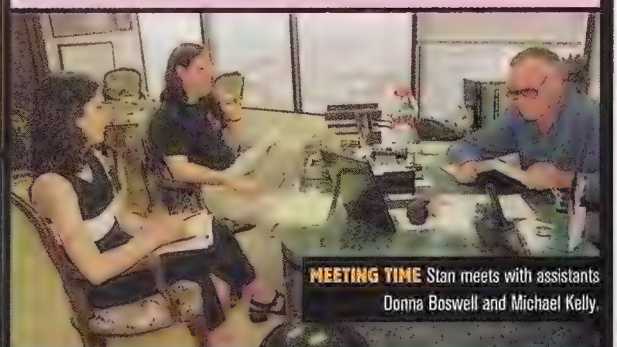
A typical day starts with a 20-minute scan of *The Hollywood Reporter* and *Daily Variety*, required reading in Stan's capacity as executive producer for Marvel's movie and TV projects, working with writers, producers and directors. "We all try to determine the direction our shows will take," Stan says, "and we try to ensure we have the best people working on them." If there's a meeting to be had, Stan is there on behalf of Marvel.

After that, Stan writes. He still does "Stan's Soapbox," a column that runs in all Marvel comics, and he's just added "Stan's Stance," a column for Marvel's Web site. There's also the "Spider-Man" daily newspaper strip running in 500 papers: "Twenty-two years and I've never missed a day," Stan says proudly. "Somebody told me that some people who write a big newspaper strip do that full-time. That's their job. For me, it's just one small part of the things that I do."

The biggest thing Stan does is network. Stan acts as the meet-and-greet man for Marvel, and the photos that line one entire wall of his office prove it. Stan stands posed with a variety of celebrities: The comedian Sinbad. Former president Ronald Reagan. Actor Michael Douglas. Musician Little Richard. And of course, actor Lou Ferrigno as the Hulk. There's even an autographed photo from Bill Clinton, but it's not the stiff, posed-behind-a-podium photo. In this picture, the president looks casual in a cowboy hat: "To Stan Lee. Happy birthday, Bill Clinton," the inscription reads.

Stan provides the "in," the doorway for Marvel to line up movie and TV deals. "That was the biggest surprise when I moved out here," Stan says. "I'm so impressed by big actors, screenwriters and producers, but they say it's an honor to meet *me*. It's very flattering. I can meet the biggest people in Hollywood, and in two minutes, it's like talking to a close friend." But Stan downplays his own impact. "It's because of the characters," he says. "It's because they loved Spider-Man as a kid, or Thor or the Hulk. Because they have a bond with those characters, they feel they have a bond with me. In a perfect world, they'd like to be talking *to* Spider-Man. As it is," he says with a wink, "they settle for the guy who plunked out Spidey's stories on an old typewriter."

STAN MOVES TO THE HALF-HOUR MEETING HE HAS EVERY MORNING with his personal assistant Donna Boswell and editorial assistant Michael Kelly. The trio map out the many stops in Stan's day and prioritize what must get done. Today, Boswell is returning from vacation. "See how important you are?" he asks her as he holds up his desktop planner. "It's right here on my calendar: 'Donna Returns.'" And there it is, all in capital letters in bold marker. Boswell smiles, and Stan moves things along. With great efficiency.



MEETING TIME Stan meets with assistants Donna Boswell and Michael Kelly.

SOUND BITES THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"THE JLA IS A LEAGUE, A COLLECTION OF SUPERSTAR INDIVIDUALS. BUT THE AVENGERS IS A TEAM—THE BEST WORKING COMBINATION OF TALENTS, ABILITIES AND PERSONALITIES."
—*Kurt Busiek, writer of* Avengers *(Wizard #77, January 1998)*

"Okay, we've got credit-card bills to go over, 'Stan's Stance' and a week of the 'Spider-Man' strip. Where do we sit on the deadlines?" Stan asks. Kelly rattles deadlines off, and Stan makes a note to write "Stance" later in the day when he goes home. "Would you please hand me a disk?" he asks. "I'm going to put this on the computer right now." For someone who grew up in a non-silicon age, Stan is amazingly computer-literate, and in love with Marvel's Web site. "I'm getting to do more and more there," he says. "I get more e-mail than I could possibly have imagined, but it gives me a chance to talk to the people who are buying our books, to learn what they like and don't like. It's a wonderful tool."

That person-to-person touch is important to Stan. No one comes before the fans in his eyes. "Mike, be sure to send this guy a No-Prize," he says to Kelly, handing off a letter worthy of recognition. But before he can finish the thought, he stops. "No, wait! Give it back to me—I want to enclose a personal note."

Stan's meticulous nature extends to the relationship with his brother, Larry Lieber, the artist on the "Spider-Man" daily strip. Stan needs to get in touch with Lieber that afternoon. "I have a gorilla in the next story," Stan explains. "But it's an artificial gorilla. I gotta explain how it's gonna look." Most 75-year-olds would get a one-way trip to the rubber room if they said this. But with Stan, it's all in a day's work.

The meeting ends, and Boswell still beams over Stan's welcome back. That's the thing about Stan, according to Kelly. "He treats everyone special," Kelly says. "But all he expects to be

PERSONAL TOUCH Stan makes time to autograph books for fans.

treated like is a regular guy. He's a big celebrity in the comic book world, and really a celebrity to a lot of America. But he doesn't care. That doesn't matter to him."

After the meeting, Stan takes time to autograph comics for fans. "Times like this, I'm glad my name isn't Englebert Humperdink," he quips. But even for a man with seven letters in his name, it's a big job. "I actually bought a rubber stamp with my signature once," he says. "But you know what? I've never used it."

Then, Kelly lays out two copies of the *Marvel Universe* hardcover. Some Marvel employees have made contact with actors Ed Asner (a man highly influential in the Screen Actors Guild) and Nicolas Cage (a huge comics fan). Stan needs to write an inscription in the books for each celebrity. And for the first time today, the man usually bubbling over with energy and excitement goes absolutely silent. "No, I can't talk right now," he says to a reporter. "I will again in a minute. But this is important."

Stan pulls out a separate sheet of paper and writes two inscriptions. He reads them over, paces around the office, and crosses out a line or two on each, writing in new words as he goes. Finally satisfied, he transcribes the inscriptions in the books, finishing off with a big "Excelsior! Stan Lee." He takes a deep breath. "Make sure these get sent out today, please?" he asks Kelly. "Hopefully, something good for Marvel will come of this."

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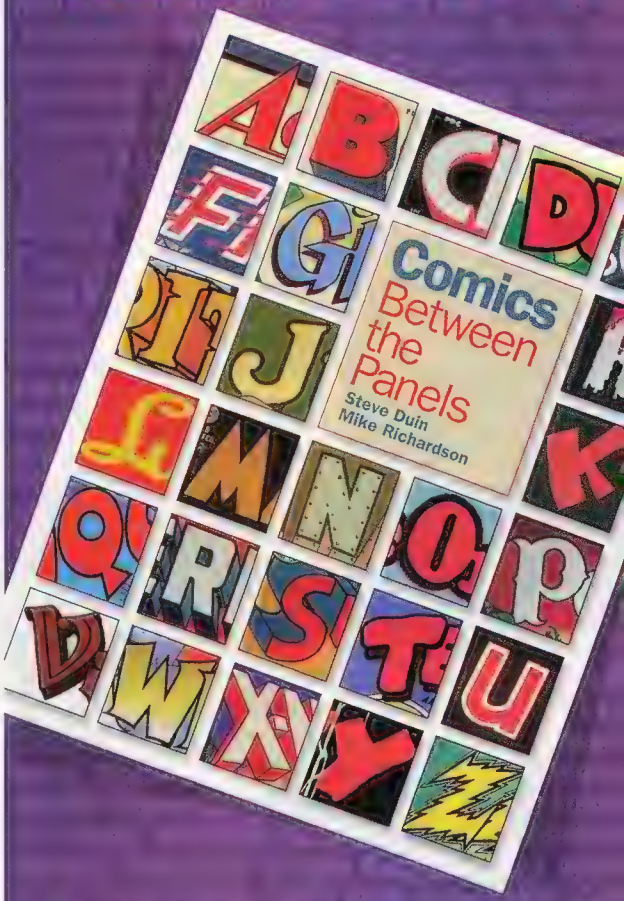

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THE OTHER GUYS

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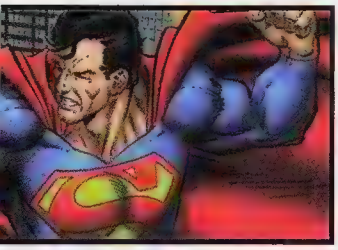
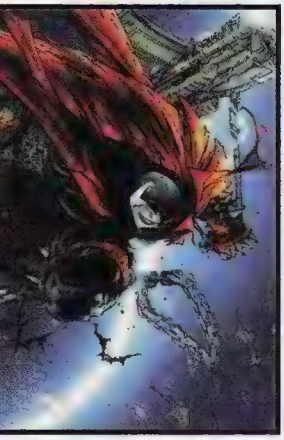


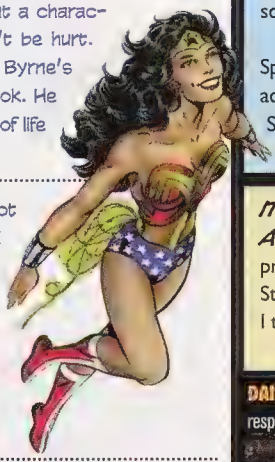
SUPERMAN "A classic. But I don't envy the writers and artists who work on Superman. They walk a tightrope. Superman has been around so long that, as a reader, you feel like you've seen it all before. But if the creators try to change him, the readers all rebel against it because Superman is such a strong icon."

BATMAN "Batman would be an easy character to write. He's a very realistic character—he's just human, with no superpowers. For me, the human characters are the easiest to write. Plus, there's a real dark, mysterious element you can get in there. I wouldn't mind writing a Batman strip."



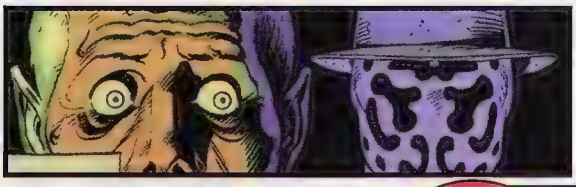
SPAWN "I'll admit I don't read it. But I do thumb through it every month. The artwork is fabulous."

WONDER WOMAN "The big problem with Wonder Woman is that she's almost as tough as Superman, and therefore too tough to hurt. It's hard to care about a character who can't be hurt. I liked John Byrne's run on the book. He injected a lot of life into her."



LOBO "I like Lobo. Go figure. He has a lot of personality. The stories are goofy and there's always one good laugh in there."

WATCHMEN "It's my all-time favorite comic outside of Marvel. It's an absolutely unique story. It has great characterization, it's beautifully drawn, and there's a surprise on every page. It could be the best if only it were a Marvel book. 'Cause *nothing's* better than Marvel." ■ JM



IT'S FINALLY LUNCH TIME. ON HIS WAY OUT TO THE PARKING RAMP, Stan bolts to the door to hold it open for two women entering the building. When they thank him, he tips an imaginary hat. Stan bounds up the stairs to the second floor parking level, where his car is easy to spot. It's a 1986 Mercedes 420 SEL, but probably the only one in Los Angeles with a tiny Spider-Man action figure on a suction cup inside one of the windows. It also has the license plate "MRVLCMX."

"A valet parking attendant once saw it and called me 'Mr. Vlcmx,'" Stan says. "I felt like the ambassador from the Skrull home world."

In addition to being a comic guru, Stan is also a car enthusiast. He even once owned the finest of all automobiles: a Rolls-Royce. But his current dream machine? "I wanna get a VW Beetle!" he exclaims. "I've had three Beetles in the past. I've always loved 'em! They're so small and cozy, and now they have all the modern amenities. As soon as they do a convertible, I'm there! My wife thinks I'm crazy."

Stan heads to his home just north of Beverly Hills at 2 p.m. There's writing to be done, and Stan often does it from home in the afternoons. "People say, 'You're lucky. You're getting a day off.' I always laugh," Stan remarks. "In the office, I'm talking about comics, or television or movies. I'm with artists, writers, directors. There's nothing more enjoyable. But when I go home, I'm sitting at that computer, alone in my room, writing. I would much rather be in the office than be at home working. But this is something that is very hard to explain to other people."

Not that the home environment is a bad one. The whole house is done up in antiques and art from all over the world. It looks like a museum. Stan will tell you who's behind it, in glowing terms: "It's all my wife, Joan. She could tell you when everything was sculpted and about every artist."

There is a conspicuous lack of comic memorabilia. One small Spider-Man statue can be found upstairs, but that's it. Home decor, according to Stan, is the wife's domain. "She has an amazing eye. She's been asked to decorate department store windows. I'll trust her judgment."

IT'S FINALLY AT HOME THAT STAN RELAXES JUST A BIT. Which begs the question: Is there a quiet Stan Lee? Is the private person anything like the public persona? "It's hard to say," Stan says. "You never get the opportunity to look at yourself. But I think I'm always like this. I tend to get enthusiastic fairly quickly."

And usually about what he writes. "After all these years, I still

DAILY GRIND Stan's home provides little respite from his busy schedule.

SOUND BITES "IN A PERFECT WORLD, WHEN IT IS OVER 15 YEARS FROM NOW, I HOPE THAT [FANS] SAY IT WAS REALLY FUN."
—*Joe Kelly, then-X-Men writer, on his take on Marvel's mutants (Wizard #79, March 1998*
THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

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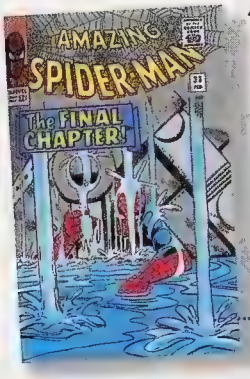
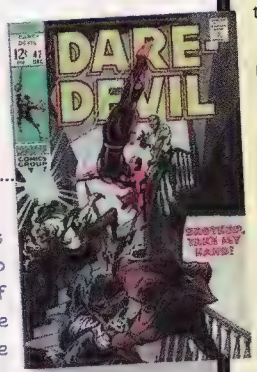
STAN'S GREATEST MOMENTS

So just what are Stan Lee's greatest stories? Here's five of Stan's faves, in, as he says, "no particular order."



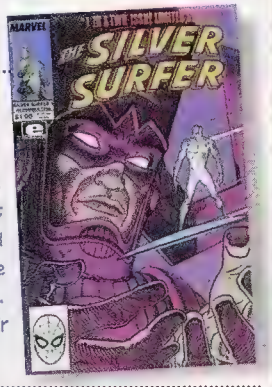
"THE FINAL CHAPTER"
Amazing Spider-Man #32-#33 "It's the one where Steve Ditko drew Spidey trapped under tons of fallen equipment in Doctor Octopus' lab. The scene just went on for page after page, but Steve paced it so beautifully. It's the kind of comic you're proud to be a part of."

"BROTHER, TAKE MY HAND"
Daredevil #47 "It's a team-up of sorts with Daredevil and Willie Lincoln, an ex-cop who got blinded in the Vietnam War. Willie is black, and it's a real brotherhood story, an anti-bigotry story about how obscene it is to dislike someone just because of their race."



"THIS MAN, THIS MONSTER"
Fantastic Four #51 "A villain builds a machine to make himself look like the Thing, and he takes the Thing's place in the FF to get revenge on Reed Richards. But in the end, he turns good and winds up saving Reed. It's a human heroism story. I think there's a bit of nobility in any character—even the bad guys."

"PARABLE"
Silver Surfer: Parable #1-#2 "This one hinges a bit on hero worship. The Surfer saves a world and the people heap this idolatry on him. But he doesn't want their worship, and doesn't think anyone should have that kind of power over others. So he rejects their worship for their own good."



"TO WAKE THE MANGOG"
Thor #154 "There's a scene where Thor lectures a bunch of hippies. He tells them there's nothing wrong with being anti-establishment, but the way to change the world is not to drop out. It's to plunge in and change it from within. I just like that nifty little speech. Think about it! A thunder god and a batch of hippies! Only in comics!" ■ JM

DOG FANCY Lee, his wife Joan, and their two dogs Tinkerbell (left) and Pookie. (Stan goes out of his way to say his wife chose the names.)

love the 'Soapbox,'" he says. "I try to write it like it's a conversation. I make it very personal. You have to establish a relationship with the reader."

That relationship remains strong. Through answering loads of mail and communicating with fans wherever possible, Stan keeps his ear to the ground. He flies to New York for quarterly Marvel editorial meetings. And Marvel editor-in-chief Bob Harras counts on his advice. "I still use Stan as a sounding board," Harras says. "I'll send him a book I have concerns about. He'll either tell me it's great and I'm crazy, or he'll give [more] feedback. He'll be critical, but he always asks for explanations first. He'll say, 'I don't quite get this part. Could you explain why it's this way?' He wants to see what the writer is thinking before he reacts to it."

Marvel Knights editor Jimmy Palmiotti is happy for Stan's input at the meetings. "He's such a fountain of knowledge," Palmiotti says. "At our last editorial meeting, he was talking about splash pages and how they should be used for action, not just a close-up of someone's head. And he showed examples comparing old Jack Kirby and John Buscema splash pages to new ones he didn't think worked as well. But no one gets angry or feels like he's stepping on their toes when he does this. He's a teacher. He does everything in such a way that he never makes anyone feel like a dummy."

Stan will give himself a chance to bone up on his relationships even more. "There was a period in the early '70s," he says, "that I lectured at colleges once a week, 52 weeks a year." The long and the short of it? He misses it. "I'm getting a speaking agent and going back on the lecture circuit. I want to do colleges again. It's a lot of fun."

Back on the road? At age 75? Shouldn't he be thinking about retirement instead? Stan looks surprised that you'd even bring it up. "Retirement?" he says with a laugh. "As young as I am? Why would I think about that? When I get old, maybe I'll start considering it."

Right now, he has too much to keep working for. "Over the years, so many people have thanked me for all the enjoyment that they've gotten out of the comic books that we've done. It's made me realize that entertainment is one of the most important things in people's lives. I feel that I'm doing something important. Of course, what I'm leading up to is that I think I should get paid more money."

Finally, as we reach 5 p.m., the phone rings. It's Donna Boswell from the office, just checking in and asking how the interview went.

"You know you never have to ask," Stan says. "Each one is always better than the last." He says this, of course, with a smile. (W)

Wizard senior staff writer Jim McLauchlin also lectures at colleges. Well, they're not so much "lectures" as they are pick-up lines, but you get the picture.

SOUND BITES — THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"WE'RE TRYING TO STRIP AWAY ALL THE NONSENSE THAT SURROUNDS [CABLE] AND GET DOWN TO HIS ESSENCE."
—*Joe Casey, Cable writer (Wizard #81, May 1998)*

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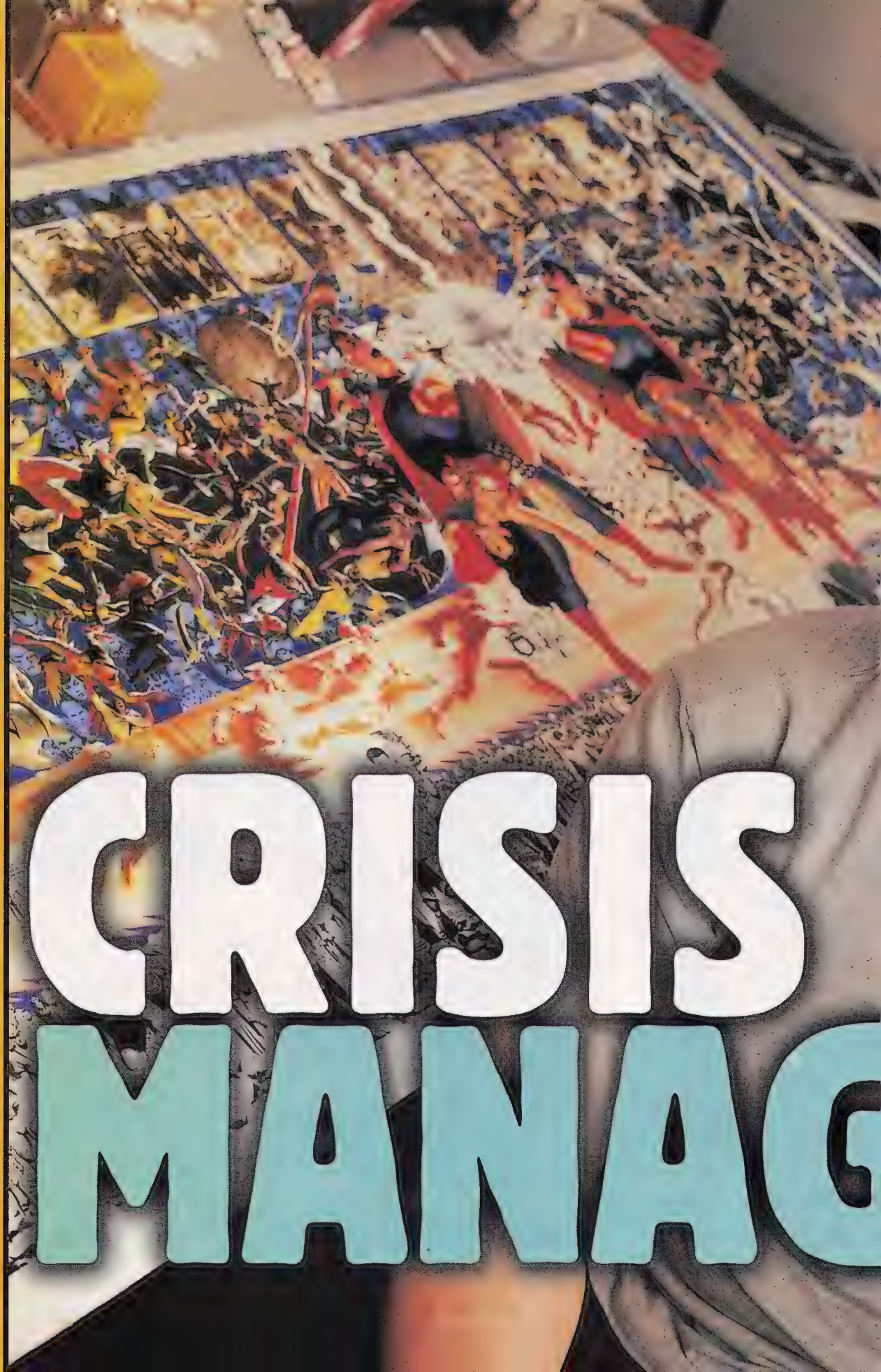

CRISIS
MANAG

A step-by-step guide to ALEX ROSS' single biggest project—more than 500 characters on one cover

By Craig Shutt

Photos by Gary Hannabarger

Alex Ross must be nuts.

First the award-winning painter bugs DC Comics until they let him collaborate with penciler George Pérez on the dust jacket for the new *Crisis on Infinite Earths* hardcover collection. Then he convinces Pérez to include every single character who appeared in the 12 issues of the 1985-1986 mini-series. All 562 of them. And then, just for fun, he adds a few more. Clearly, Ross is either big-time gonzo or he's one huge 1980s fanboy. He claims it's the latter.

"*Crisis* came out during the greatest collecting period of my life," says Ross. "It was my Golden Age. Comics were on a real upswing, and *Crisis* was a celebration of all that had gone before. I really wanted to do this."

Nearly a year after getting approval and talking it over with Pérez, the finished pencils arrived at Ross' door in September. Now, all 562 penciled characters await his brush. And Alex is itching to get started.

"The deadline is very tight, because it arrived from DC later than I expected," he worries. "But I've got an internal plan of what I can accomplish each week, and I should still make it."

Here's how it all goes down.

EMENT

1. ARRIVAL

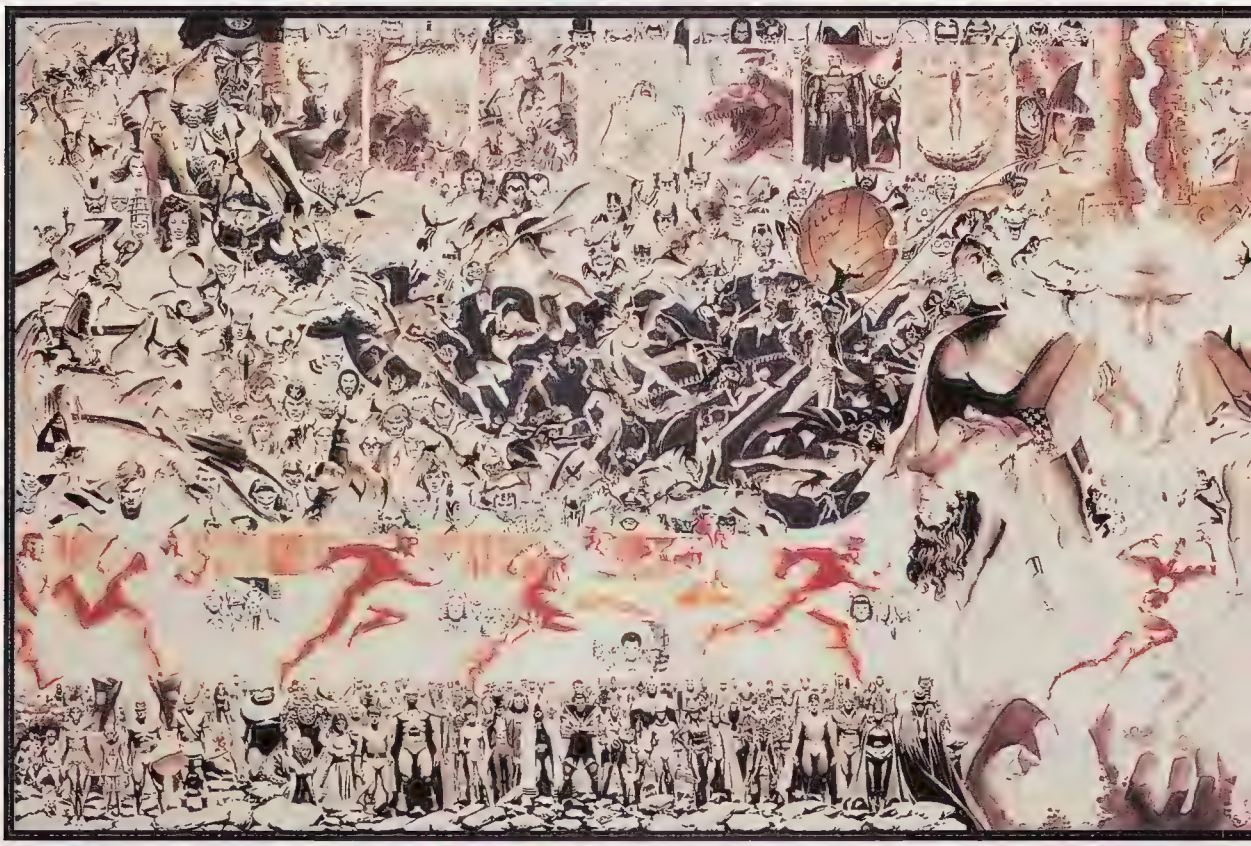
The pencils

Ross has the 5-by-2-foot penciled artwork laid out on a board in his living room, ready to work. But he'd been thinking about the project long before it reached his desk. Pérez faxed him a thumbnail with the basic composition nearly a year ago, which Ross used as a guide to decide how to handle lighting. He even took model photos of his action figures–including Megos–lit and posed in the appropriate positions needed to paint them.

The artwork breaks down into nine key elements spread over four panels (front and back main covers, plus front and back end flaps). Ross must determine how to layer the nine elements so they interact without looking cluttered or distracting from the main figures. Here's how the nine sections shake down:

- The two Supermen holding Wonder Woman and Supergirl
- A series of 12 panels across the top depicting scenes from each of the 12 issues
- Floating villains' heads along the top and through the center
- An array of floating heroes flung into space spread through the center
- The various Flashes racing across the art, culminating in Barry Allen's death just below the two Supermen
- A gathering of heroes in a mournful pose across the bottom, reflecting the aftermath of Supergirl's death
- Large figures of Harbinger and Pariah anchoring the upper corners
- A series of TV scenes scattered between the running Flash figures
- A series of Earths overlapping and finally meeting just behind the Supermen

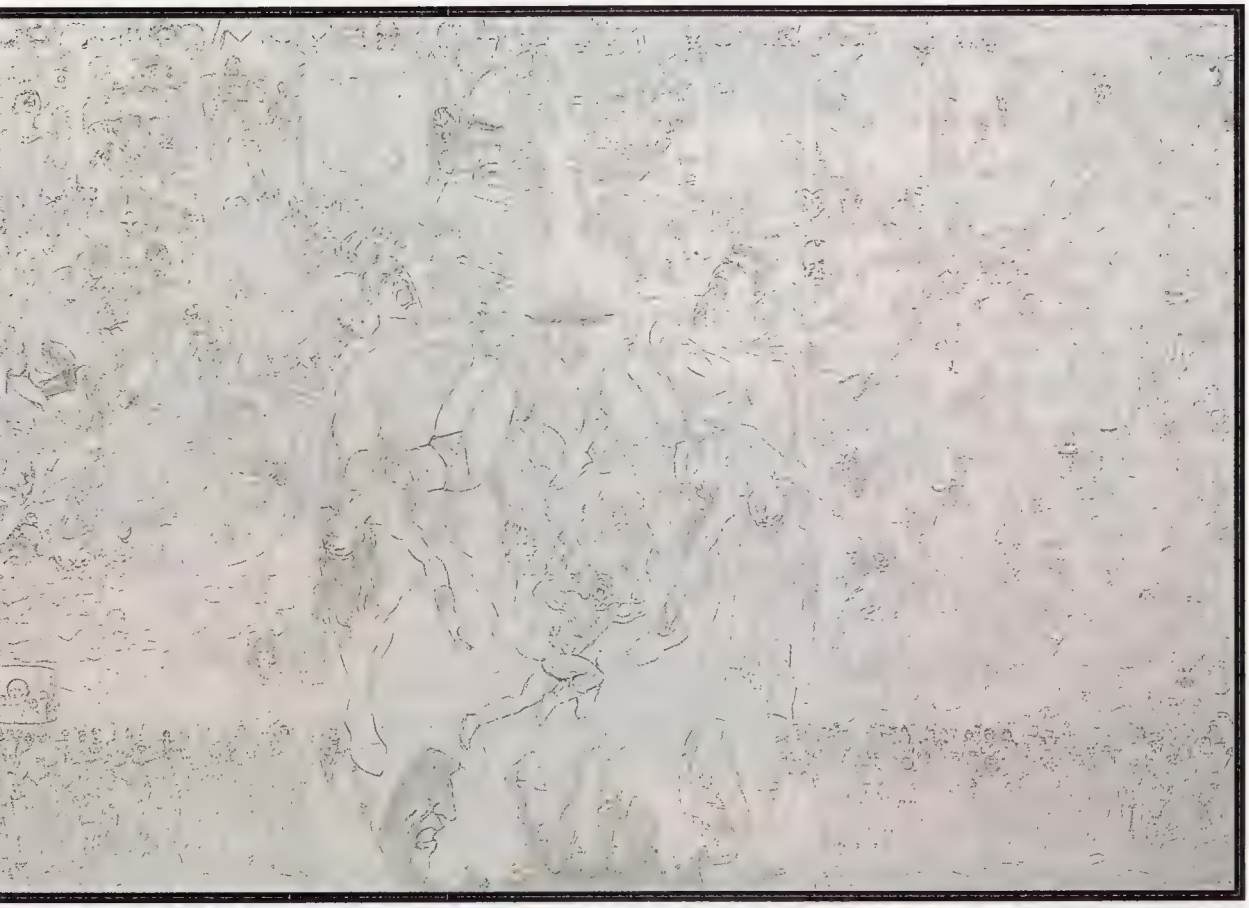
SUPER INTIMIDATING Ross begins his mammoth project with the two huge Supermen in the center.



SOUND BITES

"WE HAD LENGTHY CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE MEANING OF LIFE."
—*Todd McFarlane on talking with Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder for the "Do the Evolution" video (Wizard #88, December 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...



2. MADE IN THE SHADE

Painting black and white

Ross' first step in breathing life into his characters is painting each figure in black and white, using gouache, his preferred watercolor medium. But with something so huge and overwhelming, where do you start? "I always go for the hot spot, the payoff figure," Ross says. That means starting with the two Supermen, then doing the other large figures–Pariah, Harbinger and the Flashes. "They eat up so much space that by the time I have those done, I feel like I've gotten a lot accomplished."

He then moves to the floating figures in the middle, using photo references to paint in his favorites. Every so often, he'll move up to work on one of the 12 top panels or a villain along the top (starting with Penguin and Solomon Grundy at center-left). Later, he'll do a few of the mourning figures at the bottom, beginning with the clusters of Aqualad and Martian Manhunter, Superboy and Phantom Stranger, and Robin. "Those were either characters I really wanted to paint or ones I had good model reference for," he explains.

DARK SIDE Ross initially paints everything in black and white, before splashing on the color.

Ross tends to move around on the board, painting a figure then moving to that character's teammate or someone he was reminded of. "If I started on one side and just worked my way across, I'd get depressed over the sheer volume of work," he explains. "This way, when I look over and see some figures done, it feels like more is finished."

3. HALFWAY THERE

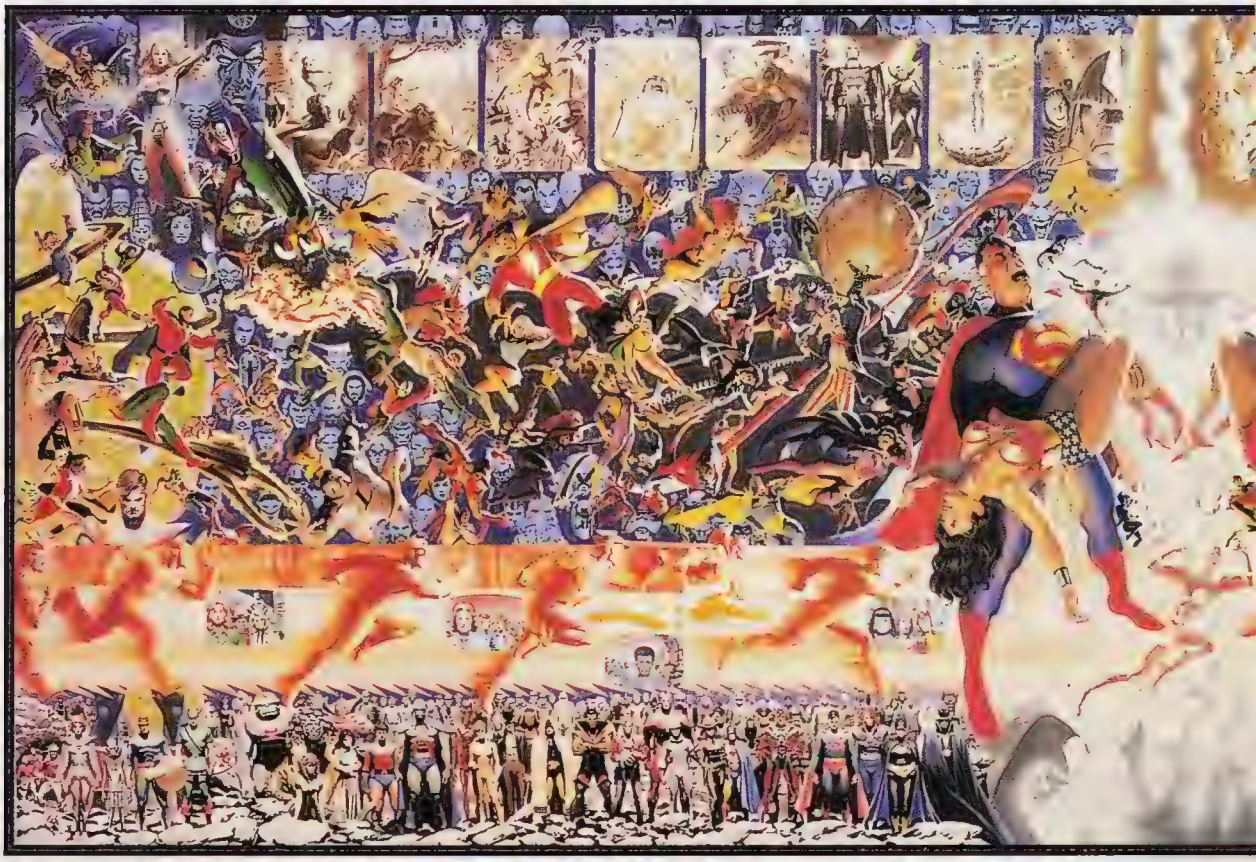
In living color

Once the black-and-white section is finished, it's time for Ross' least-favorite part. To airbrush a dark background behind certain figures in the middle and on top, he has to cut a huge vinyl overlay to mask off all the characters' heads. The mask takes a full day to cut, after which he airbrushes the background in an hour or so. "It seems almost unbelievable to me that I really did that, but it had to be done."

Ross starts his color work again with the key figures. "As long as the two Supermen are well-painted, and my work on them is above reproach, I feel pretty good," he says. "I figure if I screw up one of the secondary figures, it won't stand out." Before beginning, he paints a light orange tone over the entire piece–except for white highlight areas–to give the figures added texture.

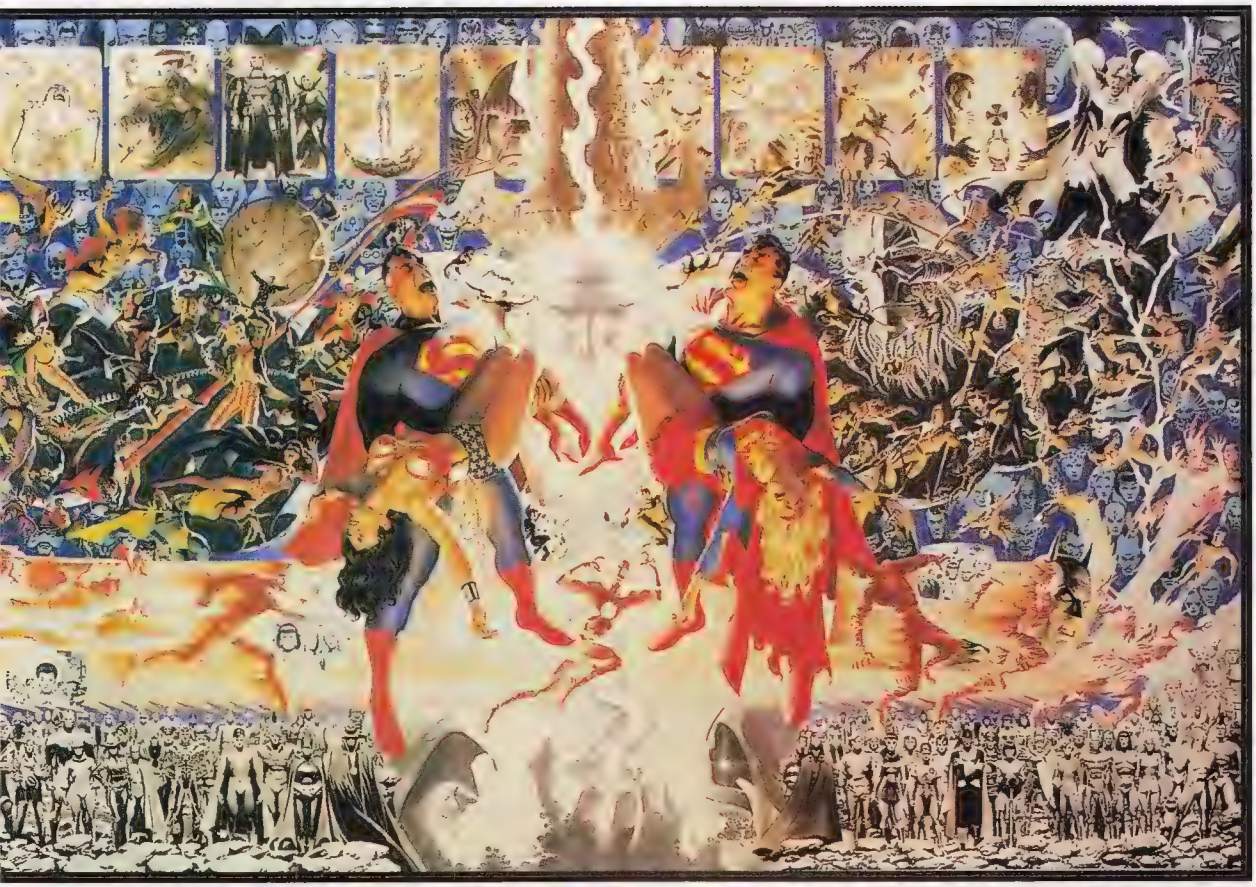
Since receiving the art, Ross has worked seven to 10 hours each day, seven days a week, on the project. But he's not worn out. "There's just so much to it!" he gushes. "It's like my fanboy dream come true!" As he paints, he's making some slight changes to Pérez's character layout, mostly adjusting body parts. "I want to make everything completely believable, and if that means moving a leg, then I'll do it. But all the costume details and faces will be there."

HEAD ACHES To paint the dark background, Ross cut out a vinyl overlay to mask off all the characters' heads.



SOUND BITES THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"'BONE' IS AS UNIQUE AS 'STAR WARS' OR 'LORD OF THE RINGS,' AND THE PEOPLE AT [NICKELODEON] UNDERSTAND THAT HAN SOLO DOESN'T BREAK OUT INTO SONG!"
—Jeff Smith, Bone creator, on the upcoming "Bone" movie (Wizard #88, December 1998)



4. FINISHED

Completely painted

Ross sections the floating figures into approximately one-tenth slices and works from left to right to color each figure, completely finishing each before moving on. Believe it or not, he actually looks to DC's *Who's Who* comic series for reference. "There are way too many costumes for me to be sure I remember all the details correctly. I don't take for granted that I know the details even with the ones I'm most familiar with."

Once the floating figures are completed, he moves to the mourner's row, painting the front row of costumes all the way across before moving to characters farther back or painting any faces. Finally, he airbrushes white highlights on explosions and across the central lighting source. And that's it.

After carefully packing the painting between layers of Masonite board, it's off to DC. In the end, Ross is pretty satisfied with the final piece. "Ultimately, some of the [floating] figures have flaws in terms of rendering or light source, but for the most part, I'm very happy with all the figures. I took time with every single face, every body pose, to make it jump out and make it work."

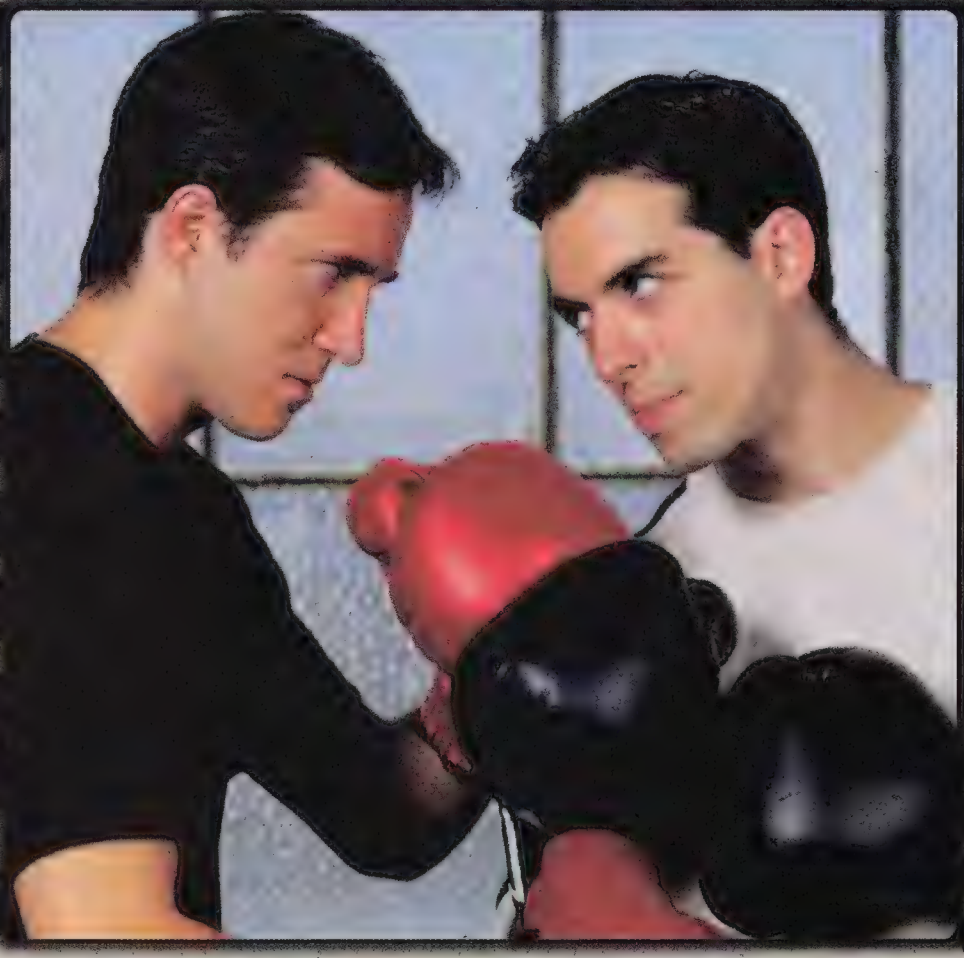
Ross hopes Pérez enjoyed his part in the creation–and the finished art–as much as Ross did his. "As I was working, I really had moments of euphoria as I took it all in: 'God, this is so cool!' It was so much fun, because it's almost infinite in its amount of absurd detail," he reflects. "It ultimately took me almost all of two months [including research]. I totally enjoyed every minute of it."

CRISIS AVERTED After nearly two months of hard work, Ross finally takes a well-deserved rest.

Chicago-based freelancer Craig Shutt once spent two months on a painting. And a nicer fence you'll never see.

CELEBRITY DEATH MATCH

TURNER



MADUREIRA

Heavyweights JOE MADUREIRA and MICHAEL TURNER duke it out to see who's comics' best—and coolest—young artist

By Matthew Senreich • Photos by J. Aronovsky/Zuma Press

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! The *Wizard* arena proudly invites you to a special match-up of two of today's youngest and most talented pencilers in the comic business!

In this corner, standing 5'10" and weighing in at a lean 150 pounds, hailing from Cliffhanger, the creator of the wildly successful creator-owned title *Battle Chasers*, the No. 1 selling American comic book in August, even outselling his former assignment *Uncanny X-Men*, the man who made manga-like art popular in mainstream comics: Joe Madureira! (Add echo here.)

And in the other corner, standing 6'3" and weighing in at a whopping 175 pounds, currently reigning as the No. 1 gun at Image's Top Cow Studios, creator of 1998's best single-selling issue *Fathom* #1, the man who can draw an unmatched mixture of realistic scenes and beautiful women (just see his former project *Witchblade*): Michael Turner! (Insert reverb here.)

So, let the brawling begin. Or at least the pre-fight psychological warfare.

"We're not the type to bash each other," Turner insists, in a feeble attempt to trick his opponent into letting his guard down. "Joe and I are friends."

Feh! *Wizard* wants to know who's better, so we pitted the two against each other in a war of words.

"Fans should know this is all in good fun," says Madureira, showing a little nervousness before the Thrilla in Comic-villa. "I mean, it's all playful."

Whatever! We posed 15 super-dooper, powerful, hard-hitting questions and let the two heavyweights slug it out.

So here it is, the battle you've been waiting for: Who's better, Joe Madureira or Michael Turner?

1. WHO'S THE BETTER ARTIST?

JOE MADUREIRA: I have to admit...I am. I have seniority. I've been doing it way longer than Mike. Seven years, baby!

MICHAEL TURNER: I think it's different. We have two totally different art styles.

MADUREIRA: He's right. It's like saying, "What's the better movie, 'Titanic' or 'Godfather'?"

TURNER: Yeah, what's better, "Star Wars" or "Godfather"? They're both great movies, but completely incomparable. But Joe, with his anime style, can do more expressions with his characters. He can get those rubbery-type faces that just convey these great animated expressions.

MADUREIRA: Rubbery-type faces? What are you talking about?

TURNER: Rubbery. Y'know, that non-realistic-looking face with the big grins and the big teeth. My art is limited because I have normal-sized faces with my more realistic art style.

MADUREIRA: That kinda makes sense.

TURNER: So with expression, he got me.

MADUREIRA: But there's some stuff where his realistic style works a lot better than mine. I'm limited like him, too.

TURNER: If he and I switched properties, the styles wouldn't work as well. For me to do a fantasy book, it would be a different feel and not as fun as *Battle Chasers* is.

2. WHAT ARE THE OTHER GUY'S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES?

TURNER: He doesn't return phone calls. He doesn't send stuff that he's supposed to send me, like *Parasite Eve* [a Sony PlayStation game].

MADUREIRA: I'm not touching this question.

TURNER: I know my own weaknesses.

MADUREIRA: We know our own weaknesses, but we're not going to share them. It's like a magician. We don't share our tricks.

3. WHO HAS THE COOLER BOSS?

MADUREIRA: Jim Lee is the coolest boss. He calls me at 5 a.m. to play [the online interactive fantasy video game] *Ultima Online*. No other boss would do that. He never yells at me when I blow a deadline, because he's even worse than me. You can't beat that scenario.

TURNER: Marc Silvestri can't yell at me, because he's not even drawing anymore.

MADUREIRA: But you guys play golf together, right?

TURNER: No. That's [Top Cow president] Brad Foxhoven. Marc doesn't play golf that much. Marc's great.

MADUREIRA: But Jim's just better. [*Laughs*]

TURNER: We don't interact as boss/employee. We're friends. As a mentor, he's taught me a lot about art. He just kicks ass.

MADUREIRA: Jim frequently takes the entire studio to paintball wars and to go gambling in Las Vegas. C'mon, that's cool.

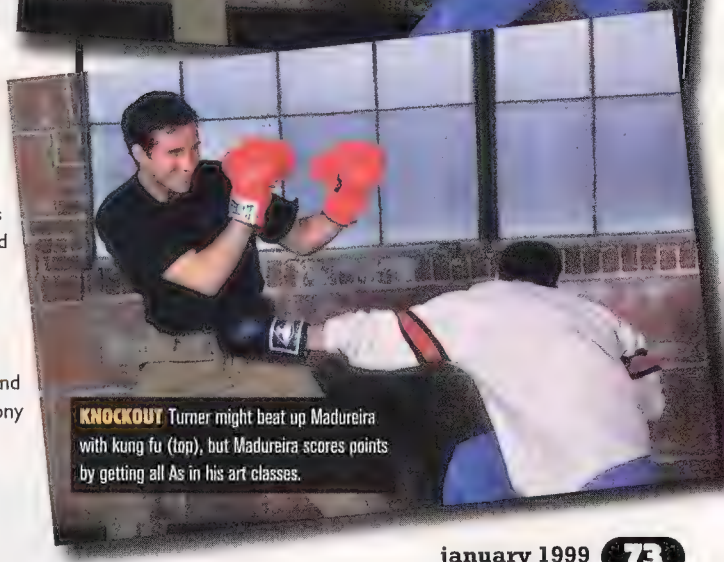
TURNER: Marc bought us all softball jerseys.

MADUREIRA: Just fess up, you're joining Cliffhanger next year.

TURNER: Uh...[*Chuckles*] that'd be, "No."

4. WOULD CLIFFHANGER HAVE BEEN STRONGER WITH MICHAEL TURNER?

TURNER: It would have been cool. The three Cliffhanger books and mine are all so different. They're four completely different genres. *Crimson* has that vampire, gothic feel. Joe's has the *Final Fantasy* feel. And with Jeff [Scott Campbell]'s, you have that James Bond/Mike Myers-type thing...Austin Powers. And with mine, you have sci-fi.



KNOCKOUT Turner might beat up Madureira with kung fu (top), but Madureira scores points by getting all As in his art classes.

VITAL STATS

Joe Madureira
Creator/artist/co-writer of *Battle Chasers*; co-founder of Cliffhanger imprint.
Dec. 3, 1974, in Queens, N.Y.
Long Island, N.Y.
Began penciling comics with a few *Marvel Comics Presents* stories back in 1991 and zipped into the limelight with 1993's *Deadpool* mini-series. Soared to fame with four years on *Uncanny X-Men* before launching his own creator-owned *Battle Chasers*.
Coconut custard pie.

Michael Turner
Creator/artist/co-writer of *Fathom*.
April 21, 1971, in Crossville, Tenn.
Los Angeles
Sparked his superstar career with *Witchblade* #1 and has penciled side projects including *Tomb Raider/Witchblade I* and *II* before shuffling over to his own creator-owned Top Cow title, *Fathom*.
Grandma's coconut custard pie.

MADUREIRA: Plus, it never hurts to have another A-list artist on board. Then we'd have been the four hottest artists in comics.
TURNER: It's like the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. But I'm at Top Cow. I like Top Cow. And I'm not leaving Top Cow.

5. WHO MAKES MORE MONEY?

TURNER: You're asking all these questions that Joe and I hate to answer.
MADUREIRA: Mike probably has more money because Mike's smart, stayed single and saved his money. Unlike me. I squandered it all.
TURNER: He bought a house.
MADUREIRA: Since my book never comes out, I guess that answers that question. [*Laughs*] Mike wins. How many books did you do in the last year? I only did like three.
TURNER: I did like 11.

6. WHO'S BETTER WITH DEADLINES?

TURNER: I'd say with confidence...um, I am. [*Laughs*]
MADUREIRA: Where's your next issue? [*Laughs*] Okay, I'll actually give this to Mike. I was good for a little while, but now I'm really behind schedule.
TURNER: I end up taking on too many projects. I should have waited before I launched *Fathom*, because I had to jump right into it after *Witchblade* and *Witchblade/Tomb Raider*. So I'm a little behind, but I'm catching up.
MADUREIRA: I can never catch up. I can't turn down outside projects either. It's what gets me excited as an artist, doing different things. But I'm getting better with *Battle Chasers*.

7. WHO DRAWS THE BETTER WOMEN?

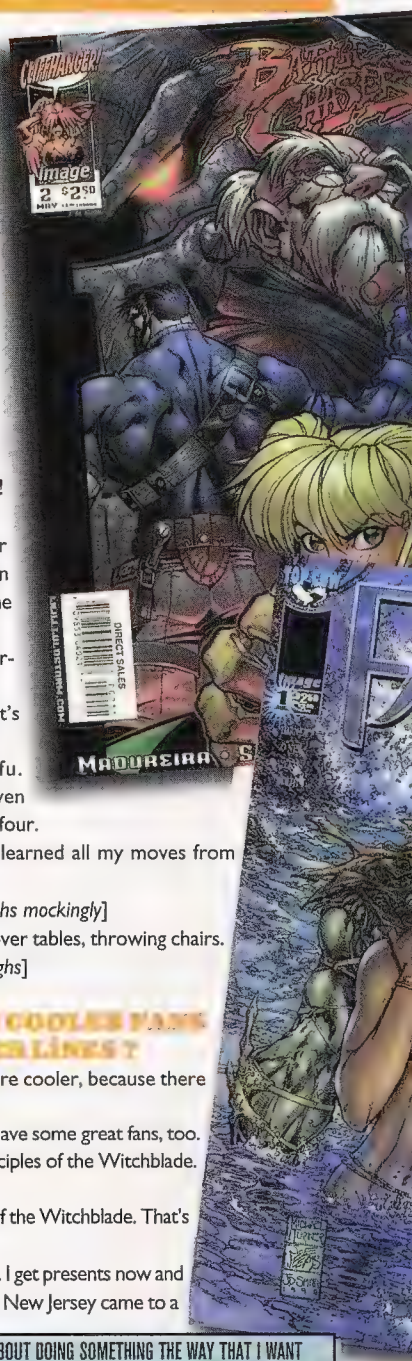
MADUREIRA: Red Monika is the hottest woman in comics.
TURNER: Please! She's falling over.
MADUREIRA: At least, it's not a Little Mermaid wanna be. [*Laughs*] But seriously, I'd say Mike has a lot more experience drawing women.
TURNER: I just draw a lot more women in my books.
MADUREIRA: Plus, my chicks are a lot more cartoony. They don't appeal to everyone. I think everyone can look at Mike's women and drool. You'd have to be a slightly demented freak if you're attracted to mine, because they're so cartoony.
TURNER: Also, a lot of women like the women I draw, because they don't have watermelons.
MADUREIRA: Oh!
TURNER: You have to admit, Monika does.
MADUREIRA: A lot of women like Monika and her watermelon boobs. I was *trying* to offend people with it. It's a parody on how women are drawn in comics. I wanted her to be the biggest of the big.
TURNER: Oh, you definitely won. [*Snickers*]

8. QUIEN ES MAS MACHO?

MADUREIRA: I'm a stud! I have a beautiful wife! But I'll still concede this one. Mike [gets more] action. [Like the time he] almost had a CENSORED at one of these CENSORED
TURNER: Oh God! Shhh! [*Laughs*]
MADUREIRA: I've never even come close to that. In fact, this happens all the time with Mike.
TURNER: But you're married! What if we fought?
MADUREIRA: Yeah, let's hear your *karate* stories.
TURNER: It's *kung* fu. [*Chuckles*] I took it for seven years and I've taught it for four.
MADUREIRA: But I've learned all my moves from Jackie Chan movies, so...
TURNER: Oh no...[*Laughs mockingly*]
MADUREIRA: Flipping over tables, throwing chairs. But I'll concede again. [*Laughs*]

9. WHO HAS THE COOLER FANS AND GETS SLICKER LINES?

MADUREIRA: My fans are cooler, because there are a lot of younger ones.
TURNER: I don't know. I have some great fans, too. There's even a club: The Disciples of the Witchblade. It's a huge group of people.
MADUREIRA: Disciples of the Witchblade. That's scary sounding.
TURNER: My fans are loyal. I get presents now and then. This group of girls from New Jersey came to a



SOUND BITES
"THIS LINE ISN'T ABOUT POPULARITY. IT'S ABOUT DOING SOMETHING THE WAY THAT I WANT IT DONE."
—*Joe Madureira on Cliffhanger (Wizard #78, February 1998)*
THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

Pittsburgh convention to give me alcohol and cologne.

MADUREIRA: I had a girl make me a quilted *Battle Chasers* pillow where she embroidered Garrison and Red Monika on the front. I support my back with the pillow while I'm working.

TURNER: You're not telling everyone your wife made it, are you?

MADUREIRA: Moving right along…

10. WHO'S SMARTER?

MADUREIRA: I'm about to hang up on you right now. [*Laughs*]

TURNER: I had good grades in school. I was going to be a doctor.

MADUREIRA: I had terrible grades. All I did was draw 24 hours a day.

TURNER: I drew in biology class. Oh, I took one art class and got a C. My teacher gave us all these assignments at the beginning of the semester and we had the entire semester to do them. I did them all in two weeks because I spent all my time playing volleyball.

MADUREIRA: I never got less than an A in art class, so that should show who's smarter and who's the better artist Mr. C-minus. [*Laughs*]

11. WHO'S THE BETTER WRITER?

TURNER: Have you written anything by yourself?

MADUREIRA: Not really.

TURNER: The only thing I wrote was *Tomb Raider/Witchblade* by myself. The rest I'm getting help with. So are you. I'll hype up [*Fathom* co-writer] Bill O'Neill.

MADUREIRA: Writing is time consuming and I never think I did as good a job as I could have or someone else could have. It's not at the level where I'd like it to be yet. That's why I'm working with [*Battle Chasers* co-writer] Munier Sharrieff.

TURNER: I like *Battle Chasers*. And so far, I'm happy with what we're doing on *Fathom*. Bill wrote a lot of Hollywood treatments and novels. So the stories we have are cool, too.

MADUREIRA: It's a learning process. We're both new to writing. And we tell stories in different ways than other writers. I'm less influenced by comics, and more by animation, so I pace the book that way. Mike's kinda the same. But I can't judge who's better.

TURNER: Why? You haven't read *Fathom* yet?

MADUREIRA: Talk about not sending out packages when you're supposed to!

TURNER: It's on its way. Talk about just going out and buying the damn book at a comic store.

MADUREIRA: Maybe if you weren't so hot, I could find it. I tried. I went all over the place.

12. FATHOM VS. BATTLE CHASERS CHARACTERS? WHO WINS?

MADUREIRA: It's four against one. What do you think would happen?

TURNER: Once she gets her buddies in there, they'd kick your characters' asses. [*Laughs*]

MADUREIRA: Well, it just hasn't been revealed that all my characters breathe underwater yet. Why don't we do that issue one day?

TURNER: Yeah, we'll do a crossover and settle it.

13. WHAT PROPERTY MAKES A BETTER MOVIE?

MADUREIRA: Mike's would be easier. But

MOO BACKWARDS IS

OOM.

TOP COW BACKWARDS IS

WOC POT.

THANKS BACKWARDS IS

SKNAHT.

FACE/OFF

One's the East Coast ex-X-Men artist and creative force behind the red-hot *Battle Chasers*, the other is the West Coast ex-*Witchblade* artist currently wowing the masses with *Fathom*. Playful banter aside, *Wizard* digs deep and asks the hard-hitting questions to get the elusive truth: Who's better?

MADUREIRA vs. TURNER

CLOTHES STYLE	
Owns a black belt	Is a black belt
BOOBS RENDERING	
Women with implausible breasts	Women with enormous breasts
BOSS	
Jim Lee, 5' 4"	Marc Silvestri, 6' 6"
COMPANY SYMBOLISM	
"Cliffhanger" = edge-of-your-seat excitement	"Top Cow" = that cow at Rutgers University that has a window built in its stomach so you can see it digest cud.
'DAWSON'S CREEK' OR 'PARTY OF FIVE'	
Watches "Party of Five"	Watches neither
COKE OR PEPSI	
Coke	Juice
PEOPLE SKILLS	
Pronunciation of name confuses fans.	Draws half-naked women, delights fans.
SYLLABLES	
"Mad-ur-ei-ra," 4	"Tur-ner," 2
ABILITY TO SCORE WITH GROUPIES	
Married, 0%	Single, 100%

AND THE WINNER IS...

...and in a 5-4 decision, it's Michael Turner by a nose! And no, we're not just saying that so he doesn't come and black-belt our asses into oblivion either. But we do wanna know where he gets his groupies.

I guess it depends on who wrote the screenplay.

TURNER: I think *Fathom* will make it to TV really quickly. I'd rather have a movie somewhere down the road, but if someone's willing to make a high-quality TV show, I'm not going to turn it down.

MADUREIRA: I never really saw *Battle Chasers* as a live-action movie. And my standards for animation are way too high, so it might never happen. For live action, it'd need a huge budget and the chances of that happening are like zero. So *Fathom* would make a better movie then.

TURNER: And I'm not going to settle for a $20 million movie for Showtime. I want it to be a good, high-budget movie.

MADUREIRA: Mine would make a better video game, I think.

TURNER: I already have a video game deal, sort of. More than likely the guys who did *Tomb Raider* [for Sony PlayStation] will work on *Fathom*. Right now, they're working on the *Witchblade* game [also for PlayStation] which will be amazing.

MADUREIRA: But don't forget that some of the original creators of *Tomb Raider* left and started their own company. So it's not the *same* guys.

TURNER: I realize that. It's even better guys. Some guys who did *Tomb Raider* and even *Goldeneye* [for Nintendo 64].

14. WHO'S BETTER AT VIDEO GAMES?

TURNER: Me. I beat him bad in *Ridge Racer* [for Sony PlayStation].

MADUREIRA: Mike got me when I was rusty. I hadn't played it in like a year.

TURNER: C'mon, I hadn't played it in a year either. Don't cop out and make excuses. But I think it depends on the video game. Like *Goldeneye*, I'd kick his ass in that, too.

MADUREIRA: No. No, no, no, no, no. In a *Goldeneye* deathmatch, I would take you out so fast. I can beat every enemy on the level with one bullet. [*Laughs*]

TURNER: We have a match. We'll have to get together with a TV. Can I just say again that I beat him in *Ridge Racer*? So the precedent is set.

MADUREIRA: I wanted to play more *Ridge Racer*, but Mike chickened out and made me watch "Twister" on his laser disc player. And you barely beat me.

TURNER: But I won and that's all that counts.

MADUREIRA: That game is so old. It shouldn't even count. We should count a game that came out in this decade.

TURNER: Joe probably plays more games than I do, but when I play a game, I play it until I become a professional.

MADUREIRA: Mike definitely sticks with one game longer than me. I'm not faithful. I get around a lot. I have to buy every single game, so my attention is divided.

TURNER: We'll have to drop our deadlines and get together to play video games all weekend. In a fighting game, like *Tekken II*? With [the fighter] Paul, I'd destroy you, Joe.

MADUREIRA: Paul? I bet you use that cheesy punch that kills a guy with one blow.

TURNER: I use the reversals.

MADUREIRA: I'm King. I like his tiger head and the wrestling moves. And you'll hear his roar when he wins. We never played each other, but we should. I'd say that I'm the better gamer. Mike can be the better artist, but I'm the better gamer.

15. WHAT'S THE WEIRDEST THING THAT'S EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?

MADUREIRA: I could probably think of some fanboy-like story, but I gotta say this interview by far.

TURNER: Compared only to the accompanying photo shoot with the boxing gloves.

MADUREIRA: Fans *do* know that we're only joking around with each other...

TURNER: They will know that, right?

Staff writer Matthew Senreich says he'd destroy BOTH these guys in Tekken II *using Law and his Bruce Lee-like fighting style.*

SOUND BITES — THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"SHE AIN'T JUST A FEMALE AQUAMAN."
—Michael Turner on Aspen Matthews, the main character of Fathom *(Wizard #79, March 1998)*

3, 2, 1...DRAW!

Who's the better artist? We let fans decide.

Brass knuckles? Bean burritos?

Nah. If Joe Madureira and Mike Turner were truly in a war of comic art domination, *Wizard* decided to give 'em weapons both are familiar with: their pencils. The pair mutually decided on a mainstream character to strut their stuff...and away they went! We posted both of 'em on our Web site (www.wizardworld.com) and let the fans decide which one would stand triumphant. It was a lot tougher than many thought.

"Man, these guys are good!" said one fan. "It was a tough pick, but you gotta go with the one that ultimately looks more like the Amazonian warrior that is Wonder Woman rather than the one that is more sexy."

"While Turner's was sexier and almost Fathom/Witchblade-like in look, Mad's had a little more character, action and just punch," posted one respondent. "This 'creator combat' was so cool. Can you do more?"

Hmm, that gives us an idea... ■ MS

Which Wonder Woman did fans like more?

SO, FROM ALL OF US HERE AT

WOC POT

TO ALL OF YOU FANS OUT THERE... WE'D LIKE TO SAY

SKNAHT

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WONDER YEAR

'WIZARD' ANSWERS THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS FOR 1999

BY THE *WIZARD* STAFF - ILLUSTRATIONS BY SERGIO ARAGONÉS

CAN SCOTT LOBDELL AND TRAVIS CHAREST MAKE WILDCATS THE NEXT X-MEN?

No, but *Wildcats* will roar!

There hasn't been this much excitement surrounding *Wildcats* (no longer spelled WildC.A.T.s) since its inception back in 1992 with Jim Lee. Now, former *Uncanny X-Men* writer Scott Lobdell and rising superstar artist Travis Charest are about to relaunch the title. And in addition to star power from his seven years on *Uncanny X-Men*, Lobdell's riding high from an acclaimed run of *Fantastic Four* (#1-#3) and *Daredevil* (#376-#379). Plus, Charest is being hailed as the best comic artist you've never really seen due to his infrequent artistic schedule. But *Wildcats* promises to fully reveal Charest's talents on a monthly basis. "Travis could illustrate the white pages phone directory and he'd amaze the world of comic readers," Lobdell says.

So where could this book go wrong? Lateness. Can Charest maintain a monthly schedule? That's the key to this book's success. "Oh, *Wildcats* will be big," Jamie Graham of Graham Crackers comic store in Naperville, Ill., says. "But to be X-Men, what'll have to happen is Travis needs to be on time, the story needs lots of action and soap opera and both Lobdell and Charest need to stay on the book for at least three or four years. That's how Byrne and Claremont made the X-Men what it is."

TAILOR MADE? With former X-Men writer Lobdell and hot phenom Charest on board, *Wildcats* could try on Marvel's mutants for size.

CAN WITCHBLADE SUCCEED WITHOUT MIKE TURNER?

If the last six months have been any indication, the answer is a definitive "yes." But it'd be a lie if Top Cow wasn't worried.

Former *Witchblade* artist Michael Turner—one of today's hottest pencilers—jumped ship from *Witchblade* to his new creator-owned property *Fathom* at Top Cow this past July. And while Turner's *Fathom* soars to the top of the sales chart, *Witchblade* minus Turner has only taken a small dip. *Witchblade* #26 (the first post-Turner issue) had a 37 percent sales decrease (but yes, it was from an inflated anniversary 25th issue). And issue #27 bounced back nicely, though not to Turner levels, and shows that there is life after Turner.

"*Witchblade* may never go back to where it was," Turner says. "But we created a property that will last. And soon exposure outside of comics will only serve to help." Contributing to that outside exposure will

WOMAN SCORNED With Turner now on *Fathom*, *Witchblade*'s future is up in the air.

be an upcoming media push in the form of a TNT television show and an Eidos Interactive video game.

Retailers are equally confident about *Witchblade*'s staying power, although they do anticipate some repercussions from Turner's departure.

"The Witchblade character has built up a mythos for this generation of comic readers," says Rich Conley of Universal City, Texas', Heroes & Fantasies. "And with Turner leaving because he was so popular, it won't be the death of the book, but I can see some people slacking off a bit."

Still, current Top Cow ads (promoting post-Turner *Witchblade* issues) reflect a concern for the changing of the *Witchblade* artist guard prefacing all creative credits with "still." However, Top Cow is banking on the established nature of the character, the writing team and newcomer artist Randy Green. "By keeping [*Witchblade* writers] David Wohl and Christina Z. on board, the heart and soul of Sara Pezzini will remain intact," Top Cow Publisher Marc Silvestri says. "And who knows, there may be another Michael Turner lurking out there."

HAS TODD MCFARLANE LEFT COMICS?

In terms of the credits box? He's gone. But as a publisher? Not even close.

Todd McFarlane's current art production on *Spawn* is minimal. "I'm inking a few pages as they come by," the Spawn creator says. "I tell the guys if they have deadline crunches, throw it on my desk and give it to me. I'm their inking assistant."

Once comics' hottest artist, McFarlane's involvement in producing comics has decreased as his other creative outputs have increased. McFarlane designs action figures for his toy company, edits the "Spawn" HBO series and even just directed an animated video for the rock band Pearl Jam called "Do the Evolution." But McFarlane maintains he hasn't left. "I'm still in comics, but I'm not hunched over a board for 10 hours a day," he says. "I'm just not doing the manual labor part. I'm more a foreman, directing things. I'm not hauling bricks, but I'm still in construction."

McFarlane now lets new *Spawn* co-writer Brian Holguin do most of the *Spawn* construction. "Todd's directing and I'm helping execute," Holguin says. "It's still Todd's overall opera. I'm just writing the individual acts."

But McFarlane is constructing new comics. Todd McFarlane Productions is planning a series of new launches in 1999, including a *Crow* series, *The Black Terror*, an Ozzy Osbourne one-shot and several other as-yet-unspecified projects. Put it all together and McFarlane's company is more involved than *ever* in comic publishing.

That's how McFarlane wants to operate. "The most important thing for me is to be an example," he says. "I'm just here to say you can do TV, you can do music, you can do licensing and you don't have to abandon comics. Will I ever leave? No. It's just part of me. I like comics. I just like the silly things."

But Todd drawing comics again? "I don't see that happening," Holguin says.

WHAT DOES DC HAVE AGAINST HAL JORDAN?

It's not so much that DC hates Hal Jordan, the company just has too much pride to undo the past.

Jordan was the Green Lantern who went mad in 1994's "Emerald Twilight" storyline and was replaced by new GL Kyle Rayner. Hal died two years later in a noble sacrifice, re-igniting the sun in the "Final Night" crossover.

But controversy flared recently when Hal's Emerald Advancement Team (H.E.A.T.), a Jordan fan club, demanded Hal's

1998 EVENTLINE

A look at this year's memorable moments
Compiled by Trent D. McNeeley
NOTE: Comics are listed by their release dates, not cover dates.

JANUARY

7 *Sensational Spider-Man* #25 kicks off "Spiderhunt" storyline with Spidey on run from law

11 Superman joins Jerry Seinfeld for American Express commercial

14 *Preacher Special: One Man's War* **(below)** tells the horrific tale of the one-eyed, bald Herr Starr

21 The Thunderbolts *finally* battle The Avengers in *Thunderbolts* #12; *X-Men: The Manga* #1 imports Japanese X-stories; *Oni Double Feature* #1 features first Jay & Silent Bob comic appearance

25 The Denver Broncos squeak past the Green Bay Packers 31-24 in Super Bowl XXXII

26 President Clinton denies having sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky

28 *JLA* #16 features the Justice League's new 14-member roster

FEBRUARY

3 Karla Faye Tucker becomes first woman to die under death penalty in 14 years

4 *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #73 kicks off earthquake-filled "Cataclysm" storyline

11 *Gen*[13] #26, first full John Arcudi and Gary Frank; *Alpha Flight* #9 begins X-Men crossover

18 Marvel Mania comics-themed restaurant opens in California; Drew wins Batmobile on "The Drew Carey Show" episode; Kevin Smith's *Clerks* #1 ships; *Superman: The Man of Steel* #78 and *Aquaman* #43 launch "Millennium Giants" crossover; *The Maxx* ends with #35

25 *Youngblood* #1 **(left)** relaunches with Alan Moore and Steve Skroce

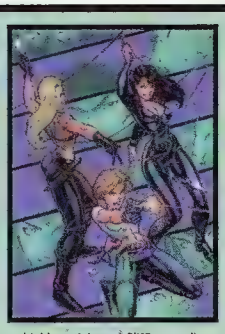
27 *Frank Frazetta Fantasy Illustrated* #1 features work by Tony Daniel, David Mack, Joseph Michael Linsner and others

MARCH

1 DC editor Archie Goodwin dies at age 60

4 *Sensational Spider-Man* #27 kicks off "Identity Crisis" with four new Spidey-roles: Dusk, Prodigy, Hornet and Ricochet.

18 J. Scott Campbell's *Danger Girl* #1 **(right)** launches the highly anticipated Cliffhanger line; *Star Trek: Starfleet Academy* #18 is the first comic written in Klingon; Marrow, Maggott and Dr. Reyes officially join the team in *X-Men* #75



20 Investors shut down Awesome Entertainment

return. A seven-issue "Emerald Knights" storyline in 1998 brought a time-traveling Hal back for a bit, and *Green Lantern* sales skyrocketed. But in the end, Hal returned to the DC dustbin.

Why? *GL* writer Ron Marz thinks he has the answer. "DC just wants to stick with a decision they made, and I think it's the right decision," Marz says. "They don't want to backtrack on the concept like Marvel did with [Spider-Man's 'Clone Saga']. Those things can get messy."

Jordan's demise will remain the same, according to *GL* editor Kevin Dooley. "Some readers want us to wipe out history," Dooley says. "They say, 'Make it a dream,' but that's bad storytelling. If we did that, we'd negate 'Emerald Twilight.' We'd negate Kyle."

DC won't do that. Because of pride. And a bit more.

"It's a point of pride in that we think we're doing well with Kyle. Thousands of people enjoy the book every month," Dooley says. "But more importantly, it's a point of storytelling. We can't just bring Hal back and forget all the stories we've done since."

You can put a fork in Hal Jordan, at least for the foreseeable future. "Hal is a part of DC's past," Dooley concludes. "But we're continuing ahead with Kyle."

AND STAY OUT! Hal Jordan just can't cut a break with DC as Green Lantern.

WILL KEVIN SMITH STAY IN COMICS?

Yep. Just ask him. "I'm here big-time," says the acclaimed writer and director who brought such movies as "Clerks" and "Chasing Amy" to the screen. "You can't shake me."

Kevin Smith, a lifelong comic reader, scored big as a comic writer in 1998 with *Clerks* and *Daredevil*. And all indications are that his workload will *increase* in 1999. Smith plans multiple projects based on his movie characters, all of which he will write for *Clerks* publisher Oni Press. The new year should see a *Mallrats* mini-series, a "Bluntman and Chronic" strip for *Oni Double Feature* and a one-shot spinning characters out of Smith's 1999 film release, "Dogma."

On the superhero side, Smith plans a return to Marvel's *Daredevil*, tentatively with #13 in September, 1999. And the much-rumored DC Comics *Green Arrow* project? "I just had a sit-down with [editor] Darren Vincenzo," Smith says. "We'll try to get *Green Arrow* underway in 1999," Vincenzo confirms, and adds, "He's got that gig as long as he wants it. And I get the sense he's in it long term."

But how long is that? Will the bright lights of Hollywood draw him away? Smith says they won't. "Comics and movies each have their merits," he says. "I'm satisfied by both."

And that's not all. In movies—even though he's popular—Smith is one of many directors in a field with names such as Steven Spielberg and George Lucas. In comics, Smith gets to be a *very* big fish in a small pond. "I guess I like it," he says. "And as long as the audience keeps reading, I'll keep writing."

DOES JIM LEE'S DEPARTURE SIGNAL THE END OF IMAGE?

Look into the future and what do we see? The end of Image is coming, due in large part because of Jim Lee.

DC Comics purchased Lee's WildStorm Studios in October, breaking apart the conglomeration of smaller studios that make up Image Comics. "From day one, people said that Image was never going to last, but it's outlived everyone's expectations," Lee says. "And without us [WildStorm], it may change, but I don't think it will disappear."

Since its creation in 1991, Image Comics has changed from seven former Marvel artists all of whom shared equal weight in popularity to a triumvirate of three big kahunas and a collection of smaller properties. Todd McFarlane Productions, Marc Silvestri's Top Cow Studios and WildStorm Studios combined for

23 "Titanic" cleans up at the Oscars, winning 11 Academy Awards
25 *Avengers* #4 reveals new team lineup; *Nightwing and Huntress* mini-series starts; *Star Trek: The Next Generation/X-Men* #1; loooong-awaited *X-Men/WildC.A.T.s: The Dark Age* #1 finally hits

APRIL

1 Boneyard Press publisher Hart Fisher claimed dead in what turns out to be April Fool's Day prank; Superman returns to classic duds in *Superman Forever*; Andy Kubert leaves *Ka-Zar* with #14
6 Queen of country music Tammy Wynette dies
8 Jim Lee's *C•23* card game and comic debut
15 *Battle Chasers* #1 continues the wildly popular Cliffhanger line; Chris Claremont returns to writing mutants with *Wolverine* #125
17 Former Beatle Paul McCartney's wife Linda dies
29 DC's "Girlfrenzy" week offers female character one-shots; *Elektra* ends with #19

MAY

4 Todd McFarlane buys part of NHL Edmonton Oilers
5 New Line releases "Spawn" on home video in both R- and PG-rated versions
6 Thor gets first-ever #1 **(right)** issue, courtesy of Dan Jurgens and John Romita Jr.; Top Cow unleashes newest fantasy title, *Spirit of the Tao* #1; DC's *Steel* #52, *Marvel Team-Up* #11 and *Werewolf by Night* #6 end each title

15 *Green Lantern* #100 teams Kyle Rayner with time-displaced, Hal Jordan; Cliffhanger completes line with Humberto Ramos' *Crimson* #1; *Sovereign Seven* closes with #36
14 The last "Seinfeld" episode airs

SEINFELD PHOTO COURTESY OF EVERETT COLLECTION

15 Second seasons of animated "Spawn" and "South Park" premiere; "Godzilla" opens to lackluster reviews and sales; Peter David leaves *Aquaman* with #46
26 The "Nick Fury: Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D." telefilm airs and bombs
27 Frank Miller's *300* #1 tells historic tale of Spartans' stand against the Persians; Adam Strange returns in *JLA* #20
28 Phil Hartman allegedly murdered by his wife, Brynn
29 Cartoon Network opens its first super-store at Six Flags Over Georgia amusement park

JUNE

2 Parker Brothers' Star Wars edition of *Trivial Pursuit* goes on sale
5 JLA fever leads to release *World Without Grown-Ups* and *The Nail* mini-series; *Maverick* #12 is double-sized last issue;

SOUND BITES "I EITHER LOVE COMIC BOOKS AND I'M A SMART GUY, OR I'M A F--KING DOORKNOB BECAUSE I'M STICKING AROUND IN A PLACE THAT DOESN'T CARE."
—*Todd McFarlane (Wizard #77, January 1998)*
THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

approximately 80 percent of Image's gross comic book sales with WildStorm representing about 25 percent. "Attitude-wise, it [WildStorm leaving] doesn't affect us," Silvestri says. "We're going to continue to do what we do best."

But think about Image as a whole now. No Lee. No Rob Liefeld anymore (who departed Image in 1996). Silvestri's Top Cow could stand on its own name (as it's done in the past when it left Image for a few months in 1996). Erik Larsen's still got *Savage Dragon*, but it's a solo gig and can easily be incorporated under a larger publishing banner. Jim Valentino's line of books vanished earlier in 1998. There's Image Central, but none of those books are enough of a foundation to make Image stand on its own. And lastly, there's Todd McFarlane. He looks to be the last man standing. Don't be surprised if Todd McFarlane Productions swallows all floating Image titles and ultimately makes McFarlane equal Image.

WHAT'S IN GAMBIT'S VIAL?

Medicine? Film? Twinkies? The simple answer is nobody knows. Yet.

Ever since Mr. Sinister presented Gambit with a mysterious vial with unknown content in *Uncanny X-Men* #350, X-fans have clamored for more information. But with sweeping story arcs, creative team changes and the addition of a brand-new ongoing *Gambit* solo series, don't look for the answer to pop up in *Uncanny X-Men* or *X-Men*.

"It's a mystery Fabian Nicieza and Steve Skroce will be exploring in the new *Gambit* series," X-editor Mark Powers says. "It's not part of the Magneto crossover story [scheduled for early 1999]."

The new *Gambit* series is scheduled to launch in December, but does not plan to tackle the vial question for at least another year. "We won't reveal what was in the vial during the first year of the book," *Gambit* writer Fabian Nicieza says. "First he has to find out where the vial is."

According to Nicieza, the first year of the solo series will feature an examination of how Gambit returned to the X-Men from Antarctica (where he was abandoned in *Uncanny X-Men* #350). "What's in the vial is only one interesting backdrop that Steve and I intend to get to," he says. "We're first going to focus on the secrets behind Gambit's return, specifically who helped him and why. And also we'll examine the [Thieves'] guild aspect of Gambit."

"So as for what's in the vial," chuckles Skroce, "It could be a list of things and we're not going to tell you...quite yet."

OUI-OUI! What ees een de vial from Sinistair? We find out een the year 2000, *mon ami*.

DO MARK WAID AND GRANT MORRISON RUN THE DC UNIVERSE?

Not quite. Just ask them.

"Not in any way, shape, or form," *Flash* writer Mark Waid says with a laugh. "Frankly, I think we'd like it to be that way sometimes, though. Might make things easier."

They might not run the universe, but they sure do have a lot of influence.

JLA writer Grant Morrison was instrumental in "One Million Month," a story spanning DC's entire line in September. Waid will wield tremendous power in charting DC's future with December's "Kingdom Event." The two seem to be DC's golden boys. But even they don't control everything.

"There are people who disagree sometimes with what I'd like to do," Morrison admits. Morrison refers specifically to instances like *JLA* #7; he wanted Superman pulling the moon on a chain, but was told that Superman wasn't that powerful anymore. And in an upcoming *JLA* story, Morrison really stepped over the line when he wanted Batman to use a machine gun to mow down robots. "It was going to be a splash page—a great shock value image. I think the kids would have loved it," Morrison says. "But I was told that was a complete no-no."

DC's Dan Raspler, editor for *JLA*, "One Million" and "Kingdom," says that's par for the course. "We tell freelancers such as Grant and Mark what we want. We encourage them to be as creative and open and wild as possible. But we also edit them."

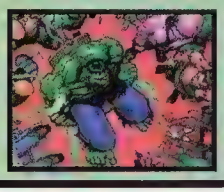
Still, Morrison and Waid—along with *Legion of Super-Heroes* writer Tom Peyer, who frequently collaborates with both writers—have

Rampaging Hulk #1 gives Hulk second ongoing title

10 "Live Kree or Die" storyline begins in *Iron Man* #7 and runs through *Avengers, Captain America* and *Quicksilver*; *Quantum & Woody* #17 is the title's final issue

15 Joe Kubert's World of Cartooning begins offering correspondence courses on comic book art

16 Detroit Red Wings sweep Washington Capitals, 4-0, to win NHL's Stanley Cup



17 Peter David ends 12-year stint with *Incredible Hulk* #467 **(left)**

19 "X-Files: Fight the Future" film opens

24 Sabretooth returns in *Wolverine* #127–with adamantium!

26 *Akiko*'s Mark Crilley is named one of 100 most creative people by *Entertainment Weekly*.

28 *Wizard* Managing Editor Andrew Kardon ties knot after seven and a half years of dating Allison Thau

JULY

1 *Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty* #1 gives Star-Spangled Avenger second monthly title; *Jay & Silent Bob* #1; The "Batman: Long Halloween" team of Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale begin *Superman for all Seasons* #1 **(right)**

8 Star Wars goes manga with *Star Wars: A New Hope–Manga*

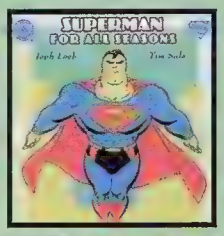
13 Awesome merges with Hyperwerks

16 Jim Shooter announces upcoming return to comics with Daring Comics imprint

17 Wizard World Chicago '98 opens, offering screening of "Gen[13]" animated film and preview of Michael Turner's *Fathom*

22 *Hellblazer* #129 sees Garth Ennis' return; *Teen Titans* ends at #24; *Fathom* #1 **(left)** hits stores in three variant editions

29 DC's second Tangent event hits



AUGUST

3 X-Men's 35th anniversary celebration begins with *Uncanny X-Men* #360; Marvel Comics 2 line debuts with *Spider-Girl* #0; *Martian Manhunter* #0 gives last of original JLAers his own ongoing title

12 *Mutant X* #1 replaces *X-Factor*

13 San Diego Comic-Con International opens offering early versions of Jay & Silent Bob action figures

14 Stuntman Marc Akerstream, 44, killed on set of TV show "The Crow: City of Angels"

17 On national TV, President Clinton admits he "misled" people about relationship with Monica Lewinsky

18 "The Batman and Superman Movie" released on home video, collecting animated three-episode "World's Finest" storyline; Korn's "Follow the Leader" album released with cover art by Todd McFarlane

19 *Thunderbolts* #19 features Charcoal, villain created for *Wizard* Create-A-Villain contest;

been referred to by staffers at DC as the company's superhero "brain trust."

"I think I've got influence because *JLA* is successful," Morrison observes. Adds Waid: "I like that think that Dan Raspler and I drive the bus together. I'd come up with concepts for Kingdom and he'd edit and tweak them."

But Raspler maintains it's all within a DC-mandated framework. "Grant did not fabricate the 'One Million' crossover, but he did come up with the best idea for us to *put* into a crossover," he says. "We do this every year. John Byrne did not write his own ticket in [1997's] *Genesis*. Keith Giffen did not write his own ticket in [1989's] *Invasion*. That's just the way it works."

CUT! CUT! CUT! Do Waid and Morrison call the shots? Not if DC has anything to say about it.

but people always are interested when you redo a book."

Renewed reader interest fueled by a marketing campaign provides a great jumping-on point for new readers. And using this concept since 1998 began, the Spidey office has sparked a sales increase of at least 20 percent before the relaunch. The success is attributed to many event driven storylines with lasting impact such as "Identity Crisis" (which sparked the new Marvel series *Slingers*) and "The Final Chapter" (which led to the impending reboot). "So in the creative sense, this restart is an opportunity to end one chapter in Spidey's life and begin another," Macchio says. "And both creatively and financially, it's a road to something better."

CAN A NEW START SPELL SUCCESS FOR SPIDER-MAN?

If other Marvel relaunches are any indication, Spider-Man is guaranteed success with its reboot this past November. So, yes.

"Here you have your most popular single character at Marvel restarting with a #1 issue and financially, that spells success," Spider-Man Line Editor Ralph Macchio says.

"Maybe we'll finally shake the dreaded 'Clone Saga' storyline that's been looming over our heads for so long," laughs Spidey writer Howard Mackie, referring to controversial 1994-1995 storyline that angered fans.

Mackie's probably right given Marvel's track record with recent relaunches. Beginning with the "Heroes Return" titles (*Avengers*, *Captain America*, *Fantastic Four* and *Iron Man*) back in late 1997/early 1998, and more recently with *Thor* and *Daredevil*, high profile Marvel reboots all debut in the top 10 best-selling comics (a huge jump for some books that barely even cracked the top 100. "In fact, we're planning at least a 200 percent increase in sales for the first Spider-Man issues," Ivan Matos of Comics Connection in Clarksville, Tenn., says. "I don't know if readers'll stick around,

HAS DC COMICS REPLACED MARVEL AS THE COMIC INDUSTRY'S LEADER?

If numbers mean anything, the answer is simple: yes.

For the past 25 years, Marvel Comics has been in the driver's seat as the No. 1 seller of comics in the business. But in recent months, Marvel and DC have been in a neck-and-neck battle to outsell one another. But DC just added a major weapon to its arsenal: Jim Lee's WildStorm Productions.

By buying WildStorm, DC adds an extra 5 percent of the market to their total. Unless Marvel has an *amazing* month, DC should be the king of the market every month effective Jan. 1, 1999. Or maybe, this is already the case.

John Robinson, who manages Graham Crackers, says, "DC has already replaced Marvel as the volume leader for our chain. They just publish more titles. And in 1999 with WildStorm there? I'll be ordering a *lot* more DC."

And numbers ain't all. Marvel is strong in superheroes. But DC

X-Men 35th anniversary continues with *X-Men* #80; *Excalibur* ends with #125; DC's *Major Bummer* is canned at #15

21 "Blade" debuts at No. 1 at the box office

25 Second "Spawn" animated video released

26 *Darkchylde: The Legacy* #1 marks return of Randy Queen's beauty to comics

SEPTEMBER

2 Steven T. Seagle and Joe Kelly resign as X-scribes, citing creative differences over direction of X-Men in upcoming crossover

8 Mark McGwire **(right)** of the St. Louis Cardinals hits 62nd home run of season, breaking Roger Maris' record; *Songs of the Witchblade* released to record stores

MARK McGWIRE PHOTO COURTESY OF ALLSPORTS PHOTOGRAPHY.

10 Marvel Knights debuts with Kevin Smith, Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti's *Daredevil* #1; "Superman Arrives" stamp unveiled in Cleveland as part of United States Postal Service salute to the 1930s

13 Acclaimed Japanese filmmaker Akira Kurasawa dies at age 88

16 *Black Panther* #1 sees King of Wakanda get ongoing series

23 Rob Liefeld returns (again) to comics with *Re:Gex* #1; Punisher gets mini-series by Bernie Wrightson; *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer* #1; *Divine Right* #6 ships (finally) after months delayed

24 New $20 bills debut in the U.S. to reduce counterfeiting

30 Sonic the Hedgehog appears with Spawn, Savage Dragon, The Maxx and other Image characters in *Sonic Super Special* #7; Black Bolt and family join Marvel Knights with *Inhumans* #1

OCTOBER

1 Toy Biz officially merges with Marvel Entertainment

4 Batman takes on The Joker at the UAW-GM Quality 500 NASCAR event in Charlotte, N.C.

6 DC Comics buys Jim Lee's WildStorm Studios, including all Homage and Cliffhanger properties

7 Chaos! goes Marvel with *Supernaturals*; John Byrne "tweaks" Spidey with *Spider-Man: Chapter 1* #1

14 *Baby's First Deadpool* book helps celebrate Deadpool month

21 Kurt Busiek and Carlos Pachecho kick off year-long project with *Avengers Forever* #1; Original Teen Titans warm-up for new ongoing with *JLA/Titans* #1; Union Jack lives in new three-issue mini

28 Spidey's four previous personas go monthly in *Slingers* #1 **(above)**

NOVEMBER

4 Marvel Kids premieres with books designed for readers aged

SOUND BITES THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"'ONCE AND FOR ALL' IS AN EXTRAORDINARILY FLEXIBLE TERM IN COMICS."
—*Chris Claremont on the return of adamantium to Wolverine (Wizard #79, March 1998)*

is strong in a number of different areas, including superheroes, animated tie-ins and the mature-readers Vertigo line. And diversity leads to stability.

"DC has stayed the course and taken a real long-term, consistent approach through good times and bad," Lee says. "I know they're a stable place to bring WildStorm."

Which leaves DC only one battle left to win: The war of public perception. "I still think the average customer views Marvel as the No. 1 company," Robinson says. "It's just that they were No. 1 for so long. It'll take a while for that belief to be shaken."

WILL CAPTAIN AMERICA GET HIS SHIELD BACK?

"Oh, he'll get it back in 1999, but don't look for it to be a joyful reunion," *Captain America* writer Mark Waid says.

Captain America lost his adamantium alloy shield in 1998 when it sunk to the bottom of the Pacific Ocean (see *Captain America* #2). And ever since then, Cap's replacement shields haven't been the same. He's battled with a museum replica of his original World War II shield. He's tested a shield created by Tony Stark (Iron Man) which had serious design flaws. And now he's prancing around, fighting injustice with an energy-based shield that's powered by his glove. "If he doesn't have his regular shield back, he'll stick with the energy one," *Cap* penciler Andy Kubert says. "But by the end of the year, you'll have an idea of where we're going with this story."

In fact, December's *Captain America* #14 is expected to uncover a major revelation concerning Cap's missing shield. However, Waid is keeping things close to the vest. "We're not going to let this story go on as long as Wolverine's missing adamantium," he says. "But like I said, the reunion will not be what you're expecting."

Kubert can't wait for that reunion. "I want to draw him throwing his shield so badly," he laughs. "I can picture in my head how he'll catch it, boomerang it and even throw it blindsighted. It's up to Mark when he'll get it back...but I keep hoping soon."

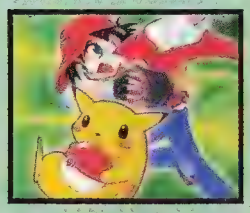
The Wizard *Staff really wants to know if anyone in the industry can eat six Saltine crackers in 60 seconds without water. Just try it.*

DON'T YIELD, BACK SHIELD When Cap gets his classic shield back in '99, it won't be a happy reunion.

5 and up; *Battlebooks* comic-based game from Marvel and Shi creator Billy Tucci debuts; Alex Ross celebrates Superman turning 60 this year, with *Superman: Peace on Earth*

11 *Amazing Spider-Man* #1 relaunches the Web-slinger

14 Spidey gets second monthly with *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* #1



18 Vampirella covers up with body armor in *Vampirella* #12; *Pokémon: The Electric Tale of Pikachu* #1 **(left)** ships from Viz, bringing Japanese sensation to American audience

25 Erik Larsen and Jeff Matsuda debut on *Wolverine* #133; three worlds collide in *Batman/Hellboy/Starman* #1

DECEMBER

2 Alex Ross and George Pérez supply cover to DC's *Crisis on Infinite Earths* slipcase hardcover; Dark Horse's *Star Wars* #1 begins ongoing monthly set a generation before first film; *Starman* hits #50

9 Fist of Khonshu rises again with *Moon Knight* #1; winner of *Wizard* Create a Monster contest appears in *Battle Chasers* #7

16 Second round of Marvel Knights books begins with *Doctor Strange* #1; Bishop and Deathbird team up in *Team X 2000* one-shot; DC's *The Kingdom* #1 kicks off huge DCU Kingdom event

23 Just in time for Christmas, Gambit gets own ongoing series

30 Close 1998 out with the *Earth X Sketchbook* **(above)**, a look behind Alex Ross' futuristic view of Marvel's characters

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BEST OF THE BEST

'Wizard' picks the finest 1998 had to offer...and what to look forward to in '99

By the Wizard Staff

BEST COMIC BOOK SERIES: ROBIN

Being a Boy Wonder sure can suck.

Yeah, Robin gets to beat up bad guys with Batman and save the world with Young Justice. But for most of the year, it's been one crisis after another for comics' preeminent high-school sophomore. After failing to save a teen's life, he almost quit the superhero biz. He can only date his girlfriend as Robin, not as Tim Drake. And then she winds up pregnant. All these hurdles are the reasons why *Robin* has graduated from 1997's Best Hero to this year's Best Comic Book Series.

Robin's greatest strength lies in its ability to keep you coming back for more. Sometimes its endings are explosive, other times the endings will dangle a lit fuse in front of you, waiting to blow next issue.

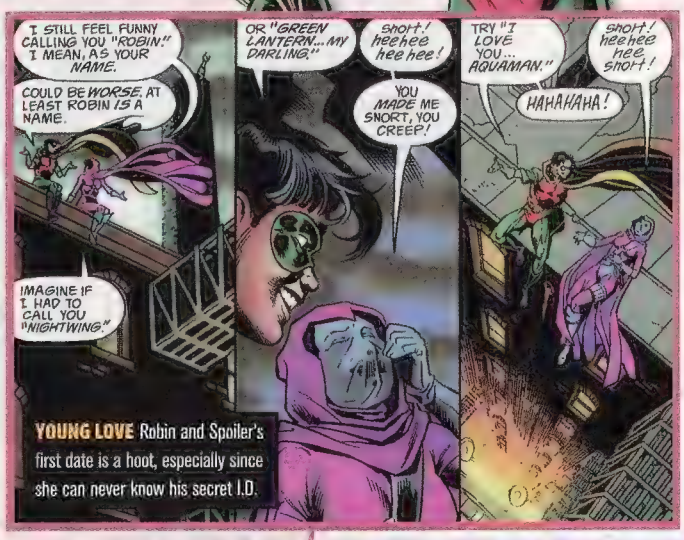
The biggest bombshell dropped in *Robin* #57: a week after his first date with Spoiler, she tells him she's pregnant (no, it's not his). The cliffhanger to issue #51 saw Robin accidentally kill Lady Shiva and be swarmed by armed soldiers (don't worry, Robin ravers—he revives Shiva in the next issue). The last panel of #52 has Tim, flying back from his European soul-search, looking down on a burning, ruined Gotham City, ravaged by an earthquake. And in *Robin* #54, after a reconciliation with former girlfriend Ariana, the visual of the issue's last panel foreshadows things to come; Tim and Ariana are shown in the front seats of his car, the only thing between them, symbolically, is Spoiler's costume lying in the back seat.

"I particularly like the character of Spoiler in *Robin*," says Peter David, writer of *Young Justice* and *Supergirl*. "I think the creative team is approaching [her pregnancy] storyline with a great deal of taste and intelligence."

And it's that sort of intelligence that makes *Robin*'s more subtle moments soar as well as the splashy ones, mixing everyday teen-age quandaries with superhero secret-identity woes. When Ariana was banished to an all-girls school last year, Tim—as Robin—took to hanging out with Stephanie Brown, a.k.a. Spoiler, and found that he enjoyed it. He liked being able to tell Spoiler about his problems as Robin, something he could never tell Ariana. But when Ari transferred back to Tim's school, Tim was left with an agonizing choice: Spoiler or Ari? He chose Spoiler, which left one problem—he can only date her as Robin since he refuses to blow the whistle on his and Batman's secret identity. Then Spoiler discovers she's having a baby...and asks Robin to accompany her to birthing classes!

When it comes right down to it, Robin is a teen you can relate to with a mix of the fantastic. Everyone's had girl problems. But toss in a double life and it makes it all the more interesting. Teen pregnancy? Happens all the time, but have you ever seen a superhero at Lamaze class? And hey, this nerdy teen actually got the girl, not to mention bringing home *Wizard*'s Best Comic for 1998.

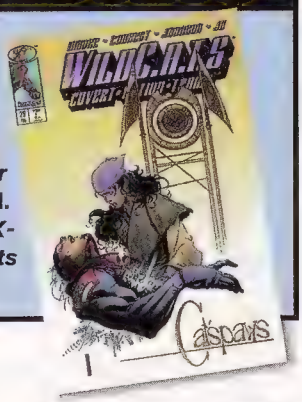
Maybe being a Boy Wonder doesn't suck, after all.



YOUNG LOVE Robin and Spoiler's first date is a hoot, especially since she can never know his secret I.D.

1999'S COMIC TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON: WILDCATS

Take an ex-X-Men writer (Scott Lobdell) plus a rising star artist (Travis Charest) and mix it with a cool super-team (Wildcats) and you have one of 1999's biggest launch. Lobdell proved with *Fantastic Four* that he can crank out one fun read. Charest blew fans away with *X-Men/WildC.A.T.s*. The new *Wildcats* is 1999's book to watch.



BEST HERO: THOR

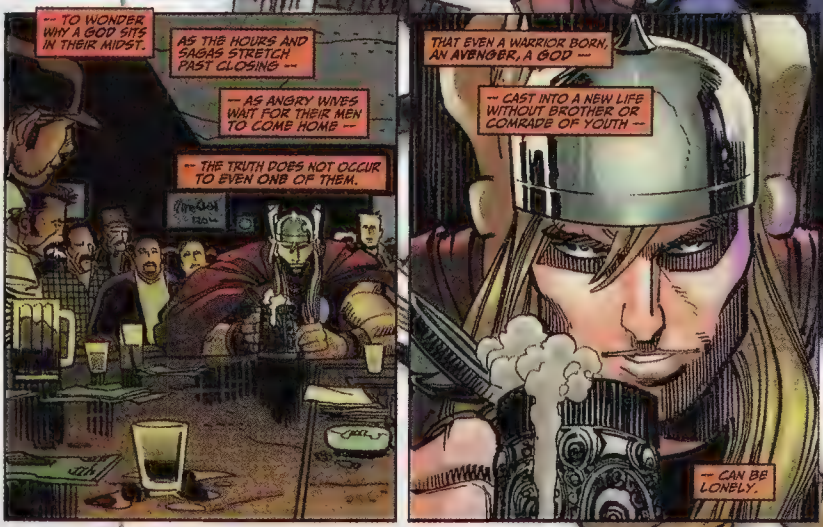
Thor *should* be a happy camper.

After all, the Thunder God's newly relaunched book is a big hit, he's a card-carrying member of the Avengers and his battles are titanically exciting. But these days the Thunder God's singin' the blues for the same thing that's making us come back for more: his private life's a mess!

Unlike past mortal alter-egos who turned into Thor, now it is *Thor* who turns *mortal*, retaining all but his massive Asgardian body. In his current series, the warrior is forced to adapt to the urban, middle-class lifestyle of Jake Olson, a New York City paramedic who perished in a battle between Thor and the Destroyer. A mysterious being called Marnot gave Thor his penance for the innocent Olson's death: live Olson's life for him. And that's just what Thor's doing. As Olson, he now has a fiancée with a daughter who needs a father figure—a role so totally alien to Thor that he keeps forgetting to pick her up after school! It also doesn't help that the li'l girl doesn't like him in the first place.

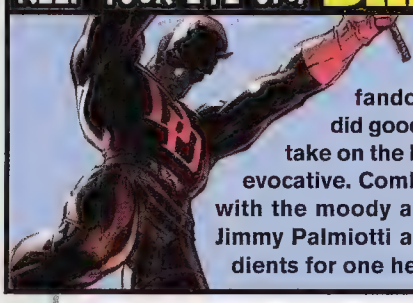
Add to that his responsibilities as an EMS worker always on the go—something that puts a crimp in his duties to the Avengers; if his teammates call and he's rushing to save a life in an ambulance (*Avengers* #8), Cap and crew'll just have to wait. Not to mention his duties as a Norse god, trying to find his Asgardian comrades, missing for more than a year. (Thor doesn't yet know that his dad Odin, and perhaps more of them, has been imprisoned by another race of gods.)

All of a sudden, being a god ain't all that easy. Who would have thought a god would have problems we could relate to?



OH, THE HUMANITY! Thor's private life is a mess, making him the most interesting of the returned heroes.

1999'S HERO TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON: DAREDEVIL



Why? Two words: Kevin Smith. Adored by fandom as the "fanboy who did good" in Hollywood, Smith's take on the Marvel hero is fresh and evocative. Combine Smith's popularity with the moody art of Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti and you have the ingredients for one hell of a comic series.

SOUND BITES

"HAL JORDAN IS DEAD. LET HIM REST IN PEACE."
—*Ron Marz on the campaign against Kyle Rayner (Wizard #79, March 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

BEST VILLAIN: HERR STARR

He'll use anything—*anything*—to get what he wants.

An army battalion, nuclear warheads, toilet paper, whatever. And what does Herr Starr, *Preacher*'s cocky, rude and obsessed leader of the super-secret religious organization called The Grail, want most? Series star Jesse Custer, whose supernatural power could deceive the world into believing he is the new Messiah—under Starr's control, of course.

But it's *how* Starr gets what he wants that gives him *Preacher*'s best scenes, mostly due to the outlandish actions he's taken and the ludicrous situations he's been in this year.

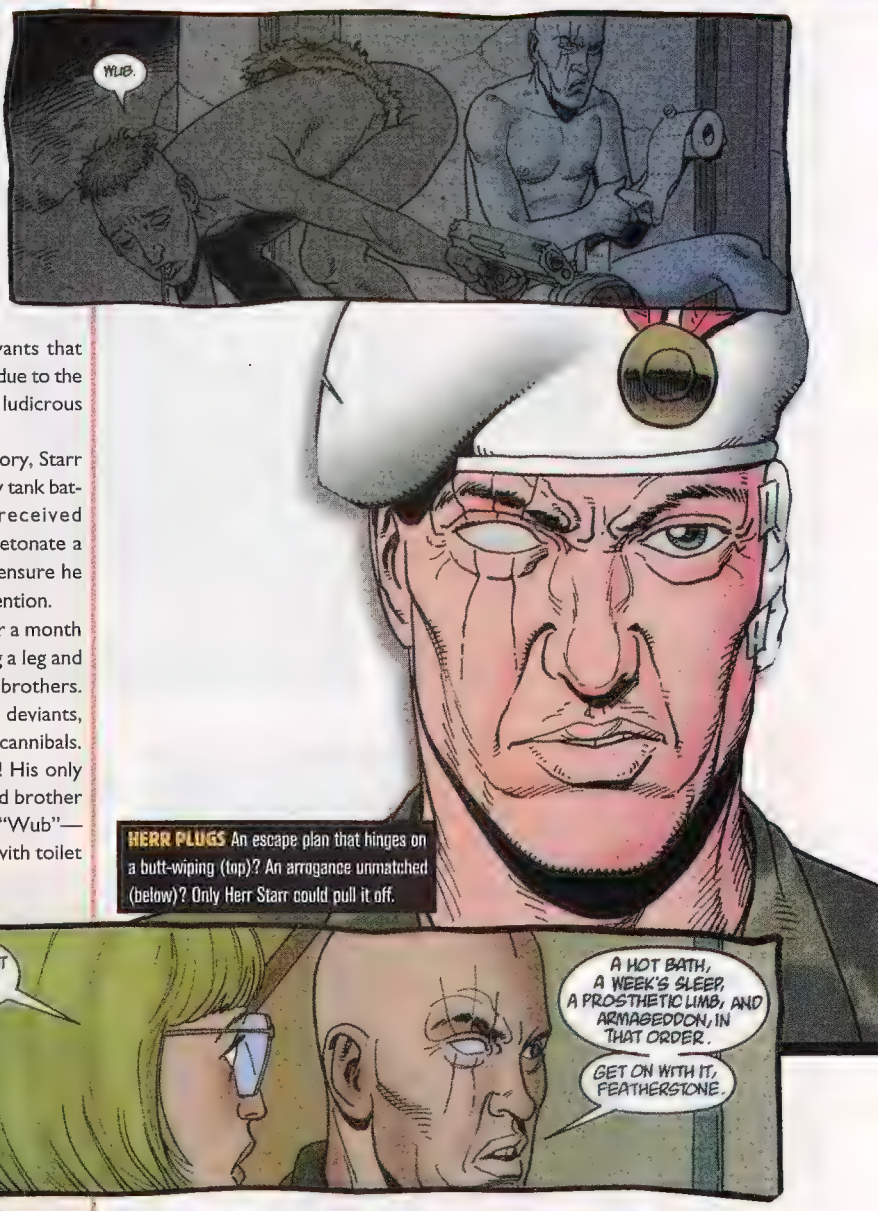
In last spring's "War In the Sun" story, Starr not only commandeered an entire Army tank battalion to trap Custer, but also received authorization from the president to detonate a nuclear warhead on American soil to ensure he couldn't be saved by any divine intervention.

The blast placed Starr in a coma for a month and he woke up in a mine shaft missing a leg and surrounded by three moronic hillbilly brothers. At first, he believed them to be sexual deviants, but they turned out to be far worse: cannibals. And his other leg was Monday's meal! His only ticket to freedom? The younger, inbred brother who wanted only one thing in return: "Wub"—as in "wipe" the half-wit's sloppy butt with toilet paper! Gah!

Even his escape is dicey. When all three brothers converge on Starr, he shoots them all...but all three fall on top of him, pinning him.

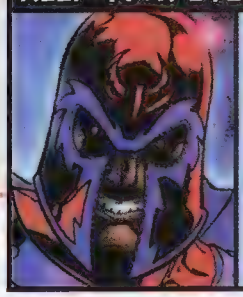
Not that that would stop him from his goal of abducting Custer. When he eventually escapes his twisted ordeal, he reveals his battle plan to a Grail aide: "[I want] a hot bath, a week's sleep, a prosthetic limb, and Armageddon," he replied. "In that order."

And with that plan in mind, we're certain that, as *Preacher*'s ongoing story enters its second half, Starr will shine even brighter. Because he'll use anything to get what he wants.



HERR PLUGS An escape plan that hinges on a butt-wiping (top)? An arrogance unmatched (below)? Only Herr Starr could pull it off.

1999'S VILLAIN TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON: MAGNETO



Marvel Comics has earth-shaking plans for the Master of Magnetism next year–and we do mean earth-shaking. No longer in hiding, the quintessential X-Men villain will emerge with a plan to tilt the planet on its axis a few degrees, spinning the entire Marvel Universe into a chaotic crossover. Next year's going to be a big one for Magneto...and one readers won't likely forget.

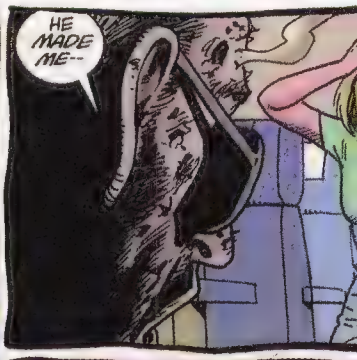
BEST WRITER: GARTH ENNIS

Garth Ennis has been shocking readers all year long. He'll bludgeon the reader with his ability to jump-start a story in the span of a few panels, keep up the frenetic pace for four issues, and then slam on the brakes. It's that pacing, along with his realistic dialogue and—we can't forget this—his talent for disturbing ultra-violence, that have made Ennis 1998's best writer.

PHOTO BY AL ORTEGA

And Ennis has changed gears repeatedly during the last year in the two monthlies he writes. An unbreakable trio of heroes betray one another in *Preacher*, and an obsessed villain detonates nukes in the heart of America. In *Hitman*, the gun-toting Tommy Monaghan starts to question his

continued



OVERDRIVE Ennis can rev readers from zero to 60 in only a few panels, as seen here in *Preacher*.

BEST ARTIST: GEORGE PÉREZ

Every artist has a specialty, right? Some do wonderful emotional human expressions. Some are famous for powerful, multi-character battle scenes. Some are known for lavishly detailed backgrounds.

George Pérez's specialty? All of the above.

When Pérez, penciler of Marvel Comics' *Avengers*, zooms in for a close-up, there's real emotion. Check out *Avengers* #6 when Captain America argues with Hawkeye, you just *know* Hawk is pissed. In battle scenes, you *feel* Pérez's power; just look at the 14-character slugfest with the Squadron Supreme from *Avengers* #5. And Pérez *never* cheats on the backgrounds; check *any* issue—every tile on a floor, every brick in the wall and every grain in wood paneling is drawn in.

PHOTO BY BRIAN SMITH

"What makes George special is that, first

continued

EYE CATCHING Pérez has such an eye for detail that for a two-issue period, he redesigned 39 whole costumes to fit medieval times.

SOUND BITES

"HEY! WHAT'S THAT STICKING OUT OF JUGGERNAUT'S PANTS?"
—*Kitty Pryde*, Uncanny X-Men #361

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

livelihood, and reaps the whirlwind of past mistakes. Things have gotten complicated and contemplative for Ennis' heroes...and we've loved every minute of it.

But don't just take it from us. *Avengers* writer (and last year's Best Writer award winner) Kurt Busiek doesn't miss a thing Ennis writes. "I'm amazingly jealous of Garth because of his confidence and his control," Busiek says. "His characters are crisply, cleanly defined and his dialogue is natural and pleasant. He paces out his stories in a way that makes the job look deceptively easy."

And Ennis' straightforward storytelling has kept us laughing, too. In *Preacher*, readers have seen Arseface slobbering his way up the music charts. And Baytor, a former lord of Hell, is now content serving drinks at the local pub in *Hitman*.

"His stuff reads as if it rolls out of his mind with no difficulty whatsoever," Busiek says. "There aren't many word balloons per panel, and no fancy tricks—just great story and characterization. With Garth, it's all steak and no sizzle. It's all there, and it works."

We couldn't have said it better ourselves.

1999'S WRITER TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON: ERIK LARSEN

PHOTO BY ACEY C. HARPER

Get ready for Larsen Mania in 1999. The *Savage Dragon* writer takes his twisted approach to storytelling and brings it to such mainstream books as *Wolverine*, *Aquaman* and a new Nova series. With his track record of telling unpredictable and funny stories in *Dragon*, Larsen is definitely the guy to watch.

and foremost, he takes care of characters and story," says *Avengers* editor Tom Brevoort. "People always point to the detail he puts in his work, but that's just the gravy. At the core, he's just a solid artist. His storytelling is the best. His characters are the best. Take away all the lavish detail—not that you'd want to—and he's still an amazing artist."

Somehow, in an age when most artists can't do four issues in a row, Pérez spent every month in 1998 penciling *Avengers* without missing an issue, a goal many believed he could not achieve. In his previous *Avengers* stints (this is his third), the most he's ever penciled is six in a row; he has penciled the first 12 so far and keeps going strong. Even a brief hospital stay couldn't keep Pérez down, penciling *Avengers* pages while lying in bed. And he even found some spare time to pencil a record-breaking 562-character, four-panel cover for DC's *Crisis on Infinite Earths* collection.

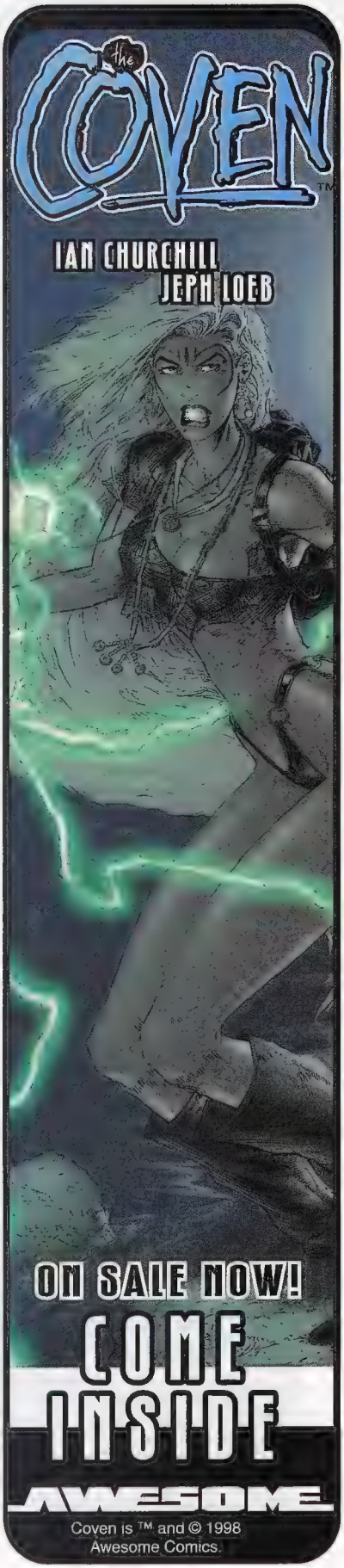
"Being at the absolute top of his profession is something George already accomplished once before in his career," says writer/artist Dan Jurgens, a former Pérez collaborator two years ago on *Teen Titans*. "To come back and do it again a decade later is nothing short of astounding. And he's still the best. I think the Avengers are now George Pérez's Avengers, and they'll remain that way forever."

It all adds up to make Pérez the master, according to famed artist Alex Ross, who's painting over Pérez's *Crisis* cover pencils. "It's hard for me to go to bed at night," Ross says. "I work 10 hours a day on George's cover, and I can't wait to work on it again the next day. These days, I get to draw any hero I want. But George Pérez is *my* hero."

1999'S ARTIST TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON: TRAVIS CHAREST

He pencils. He paints. And he does it in a way you've never even thought of.

Travis Charest will be handling the visuals on January's high-profile *Wildcats* relaunch from DC/WildStorm. Charest's (pronounced "shar-AY") detailed art is already widely respected by other pros in the business. Provided he can keep a monthly schedule, something he's had difficulty with in the past, Charest's mastery will be known by everybody.



BEST SLUGFEST: WOLVERINE VS. MARROW

Avengers vs. Thunderbolts? Bill vs. Monica? Mark McGwire and a baseball? Nah, the biggest clash of 1998 happened between X-Men teammates Wolverine and Marrow in *X-Men* #72.

Wolverine, the veteran scrapper, simply wanted to teach Marrow, the wild woman with something to prove, a lesson. The newest X-woman Marrow wasn't quite adapting to the ways of the X-Men. She clashed with team leader Storm frequently. Her attitude was unbearable to her teammates. She etched markings all over the X-mansion's pristine walls and floors. Yep, Marrow needed a good ass-whuppin' and Wolvie was gonna give it.

The two squared off, both knowing exactly what they stood for. For Wolverine: whip Marrow in line. For Marrow: pride.

Wolvie taunted the kid, and after a few dodges, he knocked her in the face, snagging a jab to the gut. But when Marrow countered with a slice of her own, drawing Wolvie's blood and licking it off her fingers, Wolverine was gunning for punishment. A backhand slap here. A kick to the gut there. And Marrow barreled over, winded.

As a battered Marrow lay on the ground, Wolvie extended his hand offering a truce and a second chance on the team. Marrow contemplated. She listened hard to Wolvie's words. And when Wolverine reached out...Marrow jammed one of her bones through the furry pug's neck!

Wolvie's scream echoed through the halls of the X-mansion. The betrayal let loose Wolverine's trademark berserker rage, and he started breaking her bones, squeezing her throat and edging his claws closer toward her eyes.

Only the interference of Cannonball tore the two apart. Wolvie and Marrow both lay bloodied while the rest of the X-Men stood over their motionless bodies in shock.

Just like readers were.

GAHHHH! Wolvie (right) sure did give Marrow a learnin'! Or was it the other way around?

1999'S SLUGFEST TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON: CABLE VS. APOCALYPSE

Oh, baby! It's taken Apocalypse more than 80,000 years to set up what he has in store next year. Now that the millennium approaches, look for Apocalypse to make his big move in late '99 forcing Cable to do what he's been trained to do: Stop Apocalypse at any cost. Any takers on who lives to see the new millennium?

SOUND BITES

"THE BOOK IS NOT CANCELED."
—*Jim Lee on his erratically published* Divine Right: The Adventures of Max Faraday *(Wizard #87, November 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

BEST MOMENT: HAL JORDAN VS. PARALLAX

They were powerful. They were fearless. They were the same guy.

It was Hal Jordan versus Hal Jordan at the cliffhanger of *Green Lantern* #105, a cinch for the greatest moment of 1998, plucked from the year's most controversial storyline.

Now before your head explodes wondering how one guy can fight himself, here's the skinny. In *Green Lantern* #100, the Hal of 10 years ago (when he was the heroic GL) was stranded in present day 1998; in #105, the Hal of the recent past (when he transformed into a bad guy, Parallax) traveled the time stream trying to return his younger self to his proper past. Parallax realized he would never exist if his younger self remained in 1998.

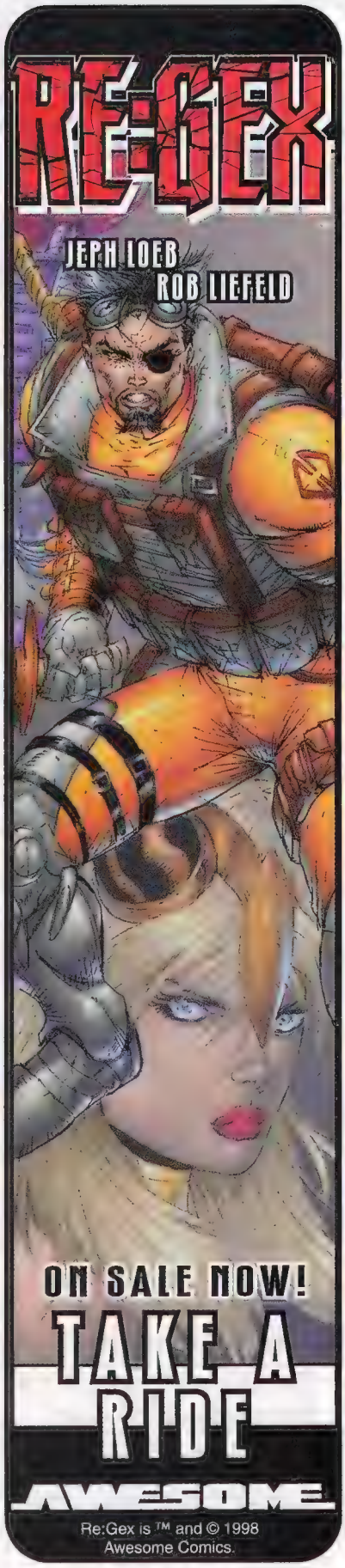
Only one problem: young Hal was MIA. And only current GL Kyle Rayner stood in Parallax's way of finding him. All Kyle wanted to do was talk things out, but with one blast the more powerful Parallax ended the conversation. "It's too late for that," Parallax said, "too late for anything except seeking out Jordan."

And then a swooping shadow arced behind him revealing an angry Jordan: "Don't bother...you found him!"

HUH? What would you do if you hadda fight yourself? Beat him, like Hal Jordan tried to.

1999'S MOMENT TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON: WOLVERINE GETS HIS ADAMANTIUM BACK

Mark your calendars, kiddies, 'cause 1999 will finally see Wolverine get his adamantium back. He *has* to. It's been more than five years since he lost it, and with new *Wolverine* regular writer and adamantium-supporter Erik Larsen on board, it's just a matter of time. Here's hopin' we get to see Wolvie shine in '99!



BEST OF THE BEST

The Littler Big Things of 1998

BEST AMISH SUPERHERO
Dutch-Boy Superman, *JLA: The Nail* #3

BEST MOMENT WHERE WE KIND WE WERE BLIND
The naked clones of Aunt May and Uncle Ben, *Deadpool* #0

BEST STRATEGIC BUBBLE PLACEMENT
Cover, *Danger Girl* #2

BEST THINLY VEILED SEXUAL INNUENDO
Having some difficulty removing a bottle from a baby's mouth, the Black Widow comments to Daredevil, "He's got your grip." *Daredevil* #2

BEST SUPPORTING CHARACTER
Red Monika's bra, regular star of *Battle Chasers*

BEST MIDGET
The evil Kid Dynamo, who had his head stuffed into a toilet by Johnny Barracuda. *Danger Girl* #2

BEST NEW HAIRCUT
Chris Bachalo, *Uncanny X-Men* penciler and ex-broccoli floret

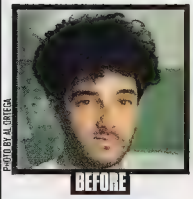


PHOTO BY AL ORTEGA
BEFORE

PHOTO BY PAUL SCHRADI
AFTER

BEST CUP SHOT
After single-handedly taking down the entire JLA, Prometheus is defeated when Catwoman whacks him in his jimmy. *JLA* #17

BEST 'GLAD WE'RE NOT HIM' MOMENT
Herr Starr, imprisoned by cannibals, tricks a mentally retarded man into giving up his gun by wiping his butt for him (see page 87). *Preacher* #39

BEST RECTAL CATASTROPHE
Gunfire–the hero who can turn anything he touches into a weapon–inadvertently turns his ass into a hand grenade and, well, boom. *Hitman* #1,000,000

The Wizard Staff

BEST "SLEEPER" BOOK: SAVAGE DRAGON

Savage Dragon may be a "sleeper" book, but every issue hits you with a wake-up call.

Writer/artist Erik Larsen takes pride in giving readers comics' most absurd, hysterical and unpredictable roller-coaster ride every month. Hitler's brain holding a gun? It's in *Savage Dragon* #49. A giant, super-strong chicken wearing a mask? That villain, Powerhouse, is in practically every issue. Supporting characters maimed and killed at the drop of a hat? Dart's legs were incinerated in *Dragon* #47 and Rapture, Dragon's ex, was blown to itty-bitty bits in #43.

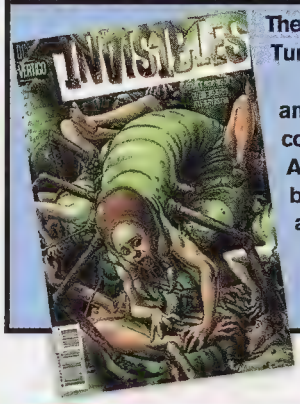
BRAIN FREEZE When you see Hitler's brain holding a gun, you know you're reading *Dragon*.

Heck, this ride is so wild, Dragon himself bit the dust in issue #50 and the book has even been retitled *Savage She-Dragon*, to suit its new star. Will Dragon return? Undoubtedly, but if what we've seen so far is any indication, forget about trying to guess how.

Put it all together and you have one rippin' funnybook yarn, according to *Avengers* writer Kurt Busiek. "*Dragon* is dramatic, it's surprising, it's uptempo," Busiek says. "It's a blast. The everyday stuff between the fights—from Dragon's romances to his friendships to the interactions of all the characters—all makes Dragon's world come to life as something distinctive. I hope *Savage Dragon* keeps rolling forever."

Savage Dragon is a three-ring circus in 32 pages. But it rarely cracks the top 100 sellers in a given month. If this book is a "sleeper," it's time for everyone to wake up.

1999'S "SLEEPER" TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON: THE INVISIBLES



The wildest, mind-bending conspiracy story going? Turn off your TV, 'cause it ain't "The X-Files."

Extra-dimensional invaders are at the door, and their earthly agents are everywhere. Every conspiracy theory you've ever heard is true. And writer Grant Morrison's Invisibles–a brave band of freedom-fighting terrorists–are trying to stave off the end of the world.

The final of three *Invisibles* series is set to start in 1999. Morrison is gearing up for his big finish–when all will finally be revealed.

SOUND BITES
THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"IF IT'S GOOD, I WANT ALL THE CREDIT. IF IT'S BAD, I WANT SOMEBODY TO BLAME."
—Gene Simmons, KISS bassist, on his hands-on business methods (Wizard #87, November 1998)

BEST NEW CHARACTER: CALIBRETTO

Turns out size *does* matter.

Calibretto is the big, bad-ass robot from Joe Madureira's fantasy/superhero title *Battle Chasers* who functions as a weapon for destruction. The catch: He loves and prefers doing yard work for an old wizard guy named Knolan rather than blowing up things.

Calibretto is a technological war golem existing in a time where most of his peers have been hunted down and destroyed. These walking, talking, wrecking machines were feared by the existing power mongers in the *Battle Chasers* world because of their capabilities. Calibretto lives on as the lone survivor of the massive purge.

What *really* makes Calibretto stand out are his design and powers. As seen in *Battle Chasers* #1, Calibretto channels lightning from the sky through his hands to defeat his foe. He has funky flame-throwers poppin' out of his shoulder, Gatling gun lasers for hands, two big spotlights on his chest. And the detail on his body only resonates that he has a lot more stuff we haven't even seen yet.

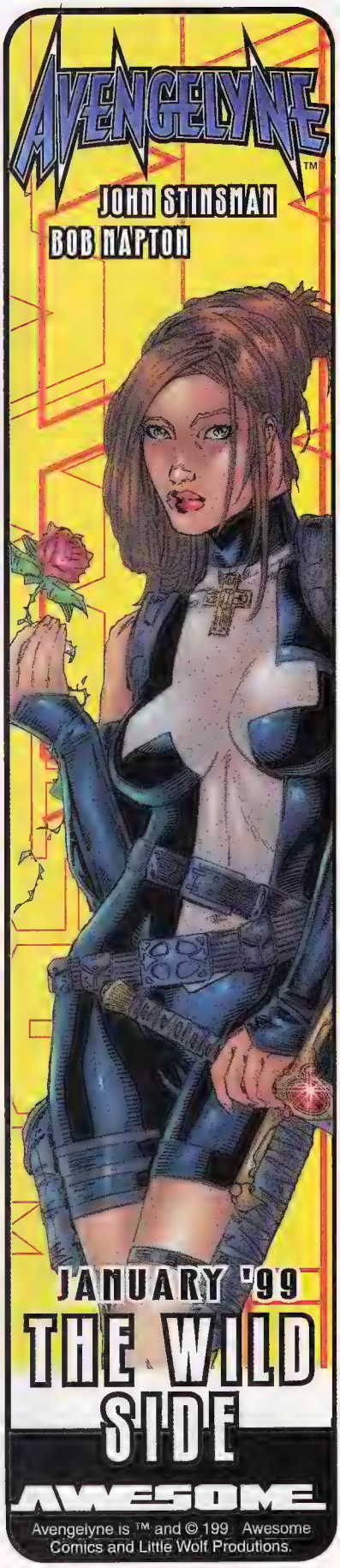
His size and sheer power contrasts his child-like innocence and sensitivity. He protects Gully, a young girl who is being hunted by werewolves and corrupt soldiers, with big-brother-like qualities.

And one more quality Calibretto has to lock up this category? He could beat the crap outta anyone else in the running.

MEN'S ROOM! MEN'S ROOM!! A good rule of thumb: If a gigantic robot like Calibretto's comin' atcha, GET OUTTA THE WAY!!

1999'S NEW CHARACTER TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON: ??????????

How the heck should *we* know who's gonna be a new character next year? If we were that good, we'd be lottery gazillionaires and get the rights to that pesky Spider-Man flick.



BEST PUBLISHER: MARVEL COMICS

In 1998, Marvel rolled the dice. And rolled a lucky 7.

The past year ushered in sweeping changes, risky ventures and many projects with a lot to live up to. The initial "Heroes Return" books—*Avengers*, *Captain America*, *Fantastic Four* and *Iron Man*—had to survive beyond the hype of their late '97 launches. Its flagship web-slinger's titles were cut in half and relaunched—not to mention given a risky revamp of a classic origin. Unproven talent were handed *Daredevil* and three other books to relaunch and manage. And *Thor*, the seemingly forgotten final Hero to Return, took flight with expectations as massive as his hammer.

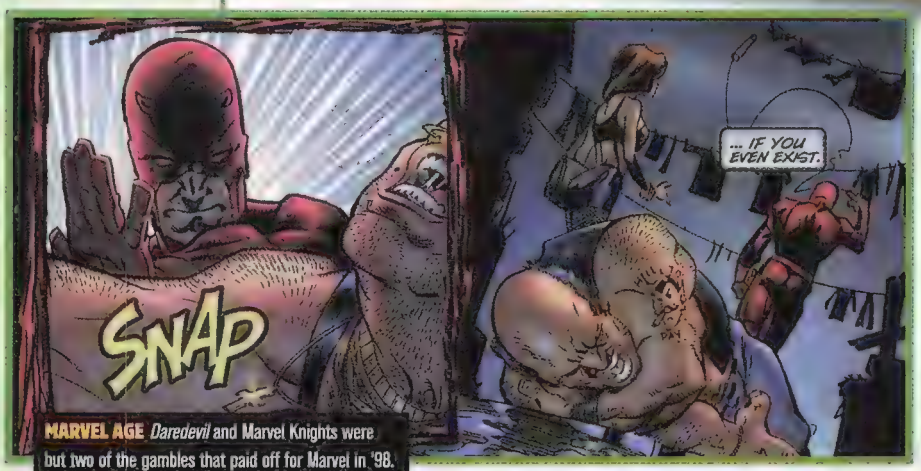
With 10 tons of pressure and the high hopes of fandom resting on its shoulders, Marvel did something simple, yet amazing, for a company in bankruptcy: It succeeded...and excelled.

The "Heroes Return" books all clicked and are consistent top-sellers. Spider-Man sales spiked the wall-crawler's books into the Top 10 for the first time in five years. *Daredevil* and the other Marvel Knights books exceeded expectations. *Thor* lit up the sales charts.

All the while, Marvel storytelling and continuity grew tighter. When "Psi War" in *X-Men* released a massive psychic pulse, characters with psionic powers in *X-Man* and *Cable* felt it. In *Avengers*, Thor sometimes begs off, responding to calls from his alter-ego (paramedic Jake Olson) in his own book, *Thor*.

Marvel spent the latter half of 1998 diversifying, adding the futuristic MC2 line, headlined by Spider-Girl, to bring in new readers with simpler, single-issue stories.

With exciting superhero action across the board from *Amazing Spider-Man* to *Uncanny X-Men*—and new and different ventures always popping up—Marvel lived up to the hype in '98.

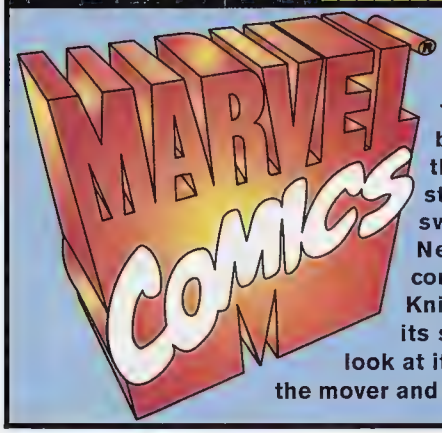


MARVEL AGE *Daredevil* and Marvel Knights were but two of the gambles that paid off for Marvel in '98.

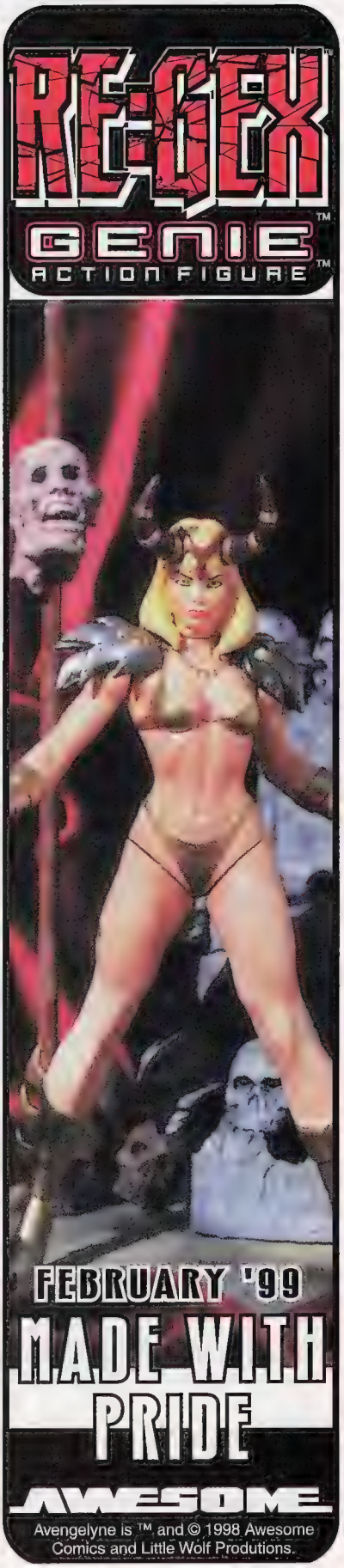
SOUND BITES THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"AIM FOR THE HEART OR THE HEAD; ANYTHING ELSE IS SUICIDE."
—*Advice on killing vampires from the "Blade" movie*

1999'S PUBLISHER TO KEEP YOUR EYE ON: MARVEL COMICS

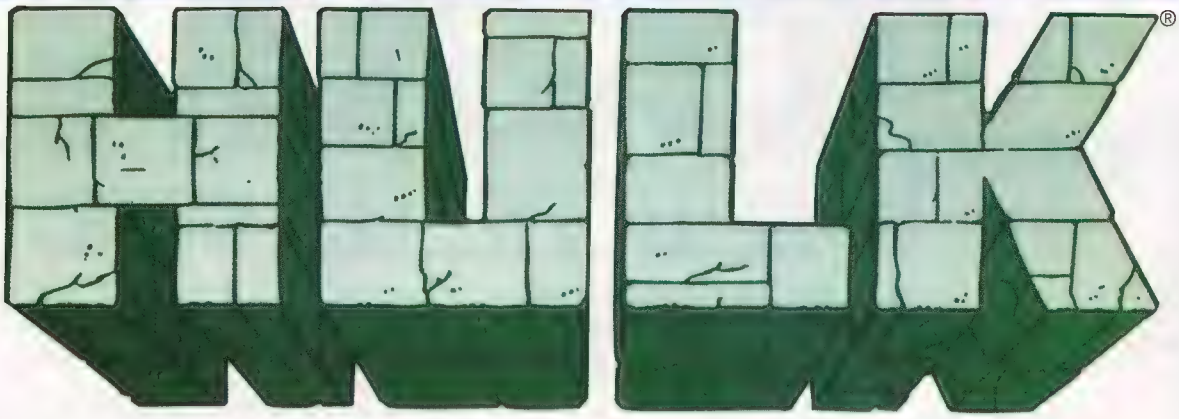


Second verse, same as the first. Change again looks to be the Marvel formula in '99. The Spider-Man relaunch buzz will likely continue into the new year. Revamp maestro John Byrne will take his swings at a Hulk relaunch. New X-Men writers will be coming at us again. The Marvel Knights line is gearing up for its second wave. Any way you look at it, Marvel will once again be the mover and shaker for '99.



HULK SMASH!
COOL STUFF THROUGH THE MAIL
MARVEL COMICS
PULIDO and MAHLSTEDT and LIQUID!

WIZARD #1/2 OFFER



Shortly after his wife Betty's death, Bruce Banner retreats to an abandoned amusement park to try and deal with the loss. Once there, he's ambushed by a new-and-improved version of one of his fiercest foes—the Rhino! And the Rhino is not there to pay his condolences. Can the Green Goliath fight his way out of this one? Send in the order form below (along with three bones) and you'll find out. Get going!

Within the Hulk #1/2, you'll find these hidden treasures:

- **A brand-new story written by Terry Kavanagh (*X-Man*) with art by Paul Lee (*Amazing Fantasy* #16)!**
- **An in-continuity story starring a new-and-improved version of the Rhino!**
- **A behind-the-scenes sketchbook look at the making of this comic!**
- **And the most gamma-radiated part of it all—this is a *Hulk* story you won't find anywhere else! This exclusive comic is only available through this *Wizard* offer!**

Get that order in before the Rhino decides to rampage through your town!

THE INCREDIBLE LAW

No reproductions of this coupon will be accepted. This coupon must be sent in the accompanying envelope. With this coupon, you can order two comics. You may put additional coupons in the same envelope. Remit by check or money order only. Canadian orders remit $4.00 per copy, other foreign orders remit $6.00 per copy. All payment must be in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank. Make all checks payable to Wizard Entertainment. Offer good only while supply lasts. Please allow eight-to-12 weeks from date of expiration for delivery. Changes of address will not be forwarded unless Wizard Entertainment is notified in writing by February 19, 1999.

THIS OFFER EXPIRES FEBRUARY 19, 1999

CASTING call

WIZARD casts the BATTLE CHASERS MOVIE!

BY A BUNCH OF WIZARD STAFFERS

It's a call to battle, Hollywood.

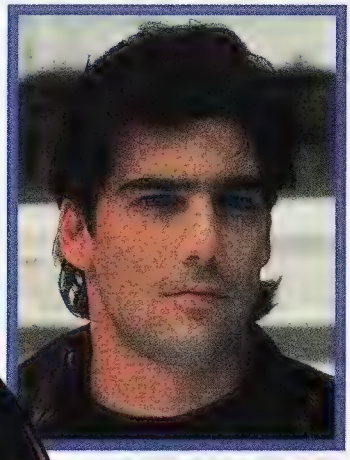
Battle Chasers the comic unleashed a powerful spell on the comic book-reading community. Put this magic on the silver screen in the form of a "Battle Chasers" movie and millions of people will soon be entranced.

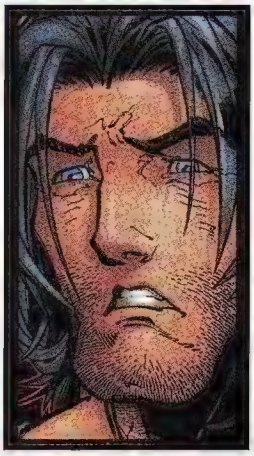
All the ingredients simply await a good stirring. There's a mysterious cast of swordsmen, giant metal warriors, beautiful women and powerful sorcerers. Then there's a diesel-fueled plot stacking the heroes up against a force of evil so tremendous that it should have its own ZIP code. And don't count out more twists than can be found in your average Slinky.

Fans will fight for seats when this high-tech, sword-and-sorcery film comes out, and we will, too. Hopefully, though, everyone'll check their swords at the door.

KEN WAHL as GARRISON THE SWORDSMAN

This meaty "Wiseguy" star has a piercing stare and the body of a sword-fightin' man. As the warrior Garrison, Ken Wahl would be the greatest cut of all.



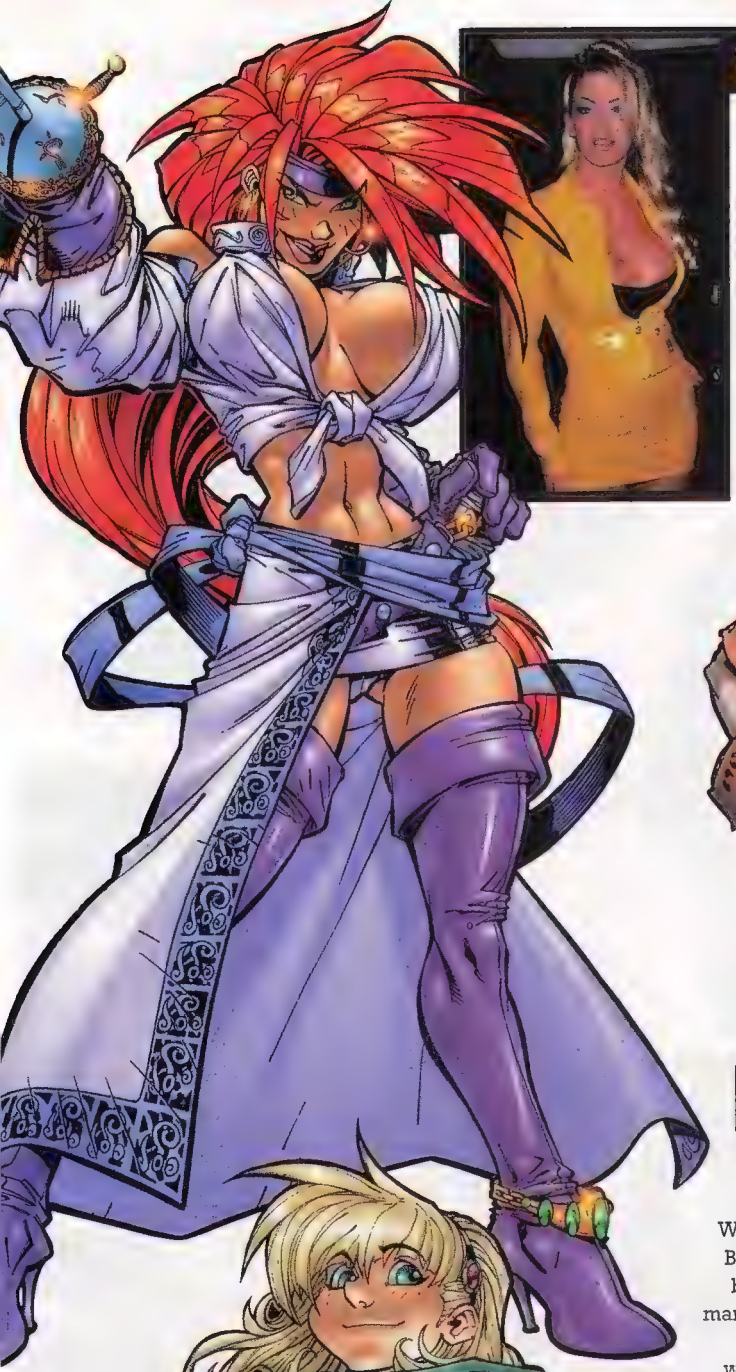


SOUND BITES

"I'M CREATING A WORLD AND CHARACTERS I CAN DO ANYTHING I WANT WITH, WHETHER THAT MEANS KILLING THEM OFF OR MAKING THEM INTO GODS."

—*Joe Madureira, creator of* Battle Chasers *(Wizard #77, January 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...



JENNA JAMESON as RED MONIKA

Sex sells. Look at Red Monika; her bodice-stretching appearances in *Battle Chasers* have fanboys in a lather. Who better to play Monika than adult-film star Jenna Jameson ("Howard Stern's Private Parts") with some red hair dye? We think Monika would be the perfect bust-out role for the sultry vixen.

JOEL GREY as KNOLAN THE SORCERER

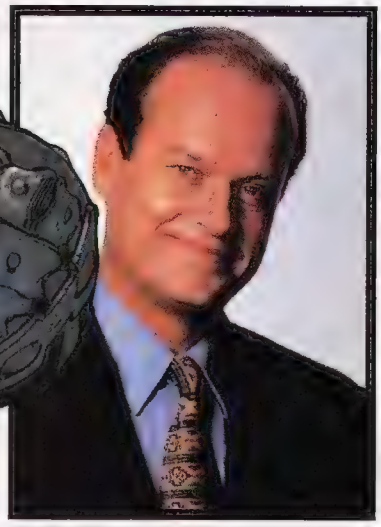
Remember Cho, the ancient martial artist wizard from "Remo Williams: The Adventure Begins"? He was played by Joel Grey, a magical man if ever there was one. By any other name, the wizened Grey *is* Knolan.

BEVERLY MITCHELL as GULLY

Little-girl lost Gully has been found. She's escaped into the real world and goes by the name Beverly Mitchell from TV's "7th Heaven."

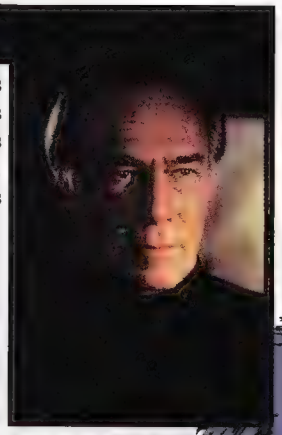
KELSEY GRAMMER as CALIBRETTO

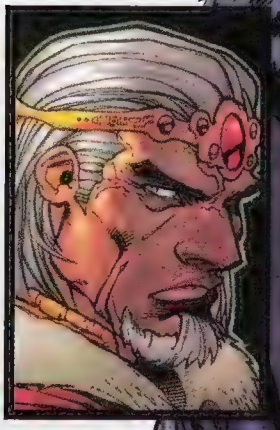
Combine Kelsey Grammer's gravelly voice as Frasier Crane ("Frasier") with a massive special-effects-created metal frame, and you have the perfectly calibrated Calibretto!



CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER as KING VANEER

Hail to the king, baby! Chris Plummer ("12 Monkeys") does evil so devilishly good, it's bad. Which is great, we think. Consider this Plummer's official coronation.





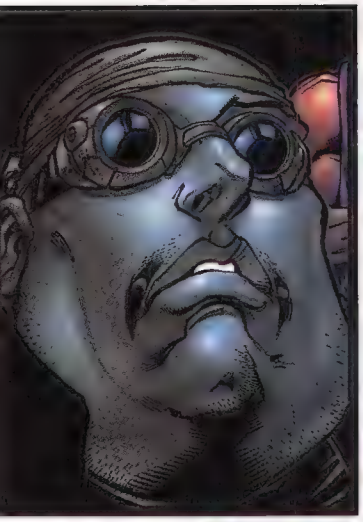
SHAQUILLE O'NEAL as MAESTRO THE WARRIOR

Basketball star Shaquille O'Neal ("Steel") has a massive frame and imposing on-court demeanor. Tack a few scars on his face and throw him a sword, and he'll practically slam dunk the role of the fiendish Maestro.

SOUND BITES

"I BUY NOTHING. YOU WANNA DO A COMIC WITH ME? I GET THE ART. IT'S PART OF THE DEAL."
—*KISS' Gene Simmons, on owning the original art to* KISS: The Psycho Circus *(Wizard #87, November 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

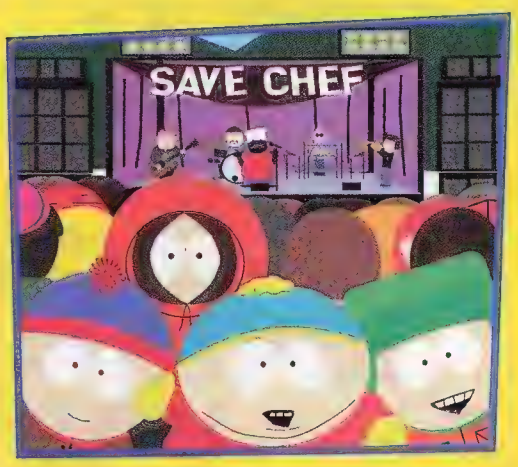


KEN HUDSON as BENGUS

Weight Watchers be damned! Ken Hudson's ("Armageddon") bulk and flair for snideness make him one big, rude dude. And the perfect portly rogue Bengus.

QUIET ON THE SET!

CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER, BEVERLY MITCHELL COURTESY THE EVERETT COLLECTION, JOEL GREY, KELSEY GRAMMER, KEN HUDSON, SHAQUILLE O'NEAL COURTESY FOTO FANTASIES, JENNA JAMESON © THOMAS LAU/OUTLINE, KEN WAHL © GREENE/OUTLINE



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SUPERMAN LIVES!

Man of Steel movie set to fly in 2000

The on-again, off-again, much-anticipated "Superman" film starring **Nicolas Cage** is back on again, according to producer **Jon Peters**. The film is scheduled to go into production next summer with an anticipated release during the summer of 2000.

"The status of 'Superman' is basically that the script is good," announced Peters, who is currently piloting the fortunes of "The Wild, Wild West," starring Will Smith and due out July 4, 1999. "Tim Burton will no longer be the director but we are currently meeting with many name directors and we will probably start shooting it next summer," he claimed.

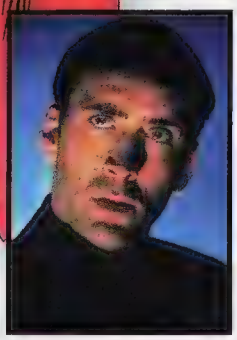
The producer stated that the budget for "Superman" will be in the $90-$100 million range, down from previous published reports of $140 million that contributed to the project stalling last spring. Another major stumbling block to the project was the script. Several were considered, including one by director/comic writer **Kevin Smith**, before Peters decided on a script by Dan Gilroy ("Chasers," "Freejack").

"It's a love story; it's the death of Superman and the rebirth of Superman," said Peters. "It's very emotional and very operatic."

And Peters is sticking by his controversial choice of Cage—who doesn't embody the All-American look of Superman—as his Man of Steel.

"What makes Nic a great Superman is that Superman is an alien. And what works in this movie is the death of the alien in him and his reflection on the alien in him," Peters said. "I wanted an Academy Award-winning actor. I didn't just want a big, tall, handsome guy. I wanted someone who could make Superman work. Feeling like an alien and that we don't belong is the essence of Superman, and only Nic Cage can play him."

Peters, who also said he believed "the Batman franchise is dead and the



STEEL CAGE MATCH Nicolas Cage (right) is still likely to suit up for a Superman film from Warner Bros., now due in 2000.

PHOTO COURTESY EVERETT COLLECTION

SOUND BITES

"I THINK THERE'S A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF TREPIDATION ABOUT COMIC BOOK MOVIES IN GENERAL RIGHT NOW."

—Nicolas Cage on a possible "Superman" movie (Wizard #86, October 1998)

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

only way it will happen is if we put Batman and Superman together," stated he would not cut corners financially.

"When you make these movies it costs a lot of money," he said. "But if they work, they work all over the world. Superman is something people know in every country and in every language, and this 'Superman' is going to be a gigantic movie."

However, a highly placed source at Warner Bros. refuted Peters' claims, including Burton's removal, stating the 'Superman' project has yet to be officially green-lighted.

"All that Jon Peters said is the speculation of the producer based on his enthusiasm and reaction to the new script," the source said. "Everybody likes it, but it still needs some work. No decisions have been made about anything. The studio is talking to everyone involved but all the pieces are not in place yet. Any announcements are premature, but the movie will be made."

So the on-again, off-again Superman project looks like it's on again. For now. ■ **DON PRICE AND JENNY PETERS**

BOX-OFFICE BREAKDOWN

BIG BLAST Bruce Willis (center), and crew had the "right stuff" this summer.

The Top 10 Comic-Related and Sci-Fi Films of 1998

NOTE: Figures are as of press time	Domestic Gross
1. "Armageddon"	$198 million
2. "Deep Impact"	$140 million
3. "Godzilla"	$136 million
4. "Mulan"	$120 million
5. "The Mask Of Zorro"	$91 million
6. "The X-Files"	$83 million
7. "Lost In Space"	$69 million
8. "Blade"	$66 million
9. "Small Soldiers"	$54 million
10. "Halloween: H20"	$54 million

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY THE EVERETT COLLECTION UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. "ARMAGEDDON" PHOTO COURTESY TOUCHSTONE PICTURES. JAKE LLOYD PHOTO © BUENA VISTA PICTURES/COURTESY OF FOTO FANTASIES.

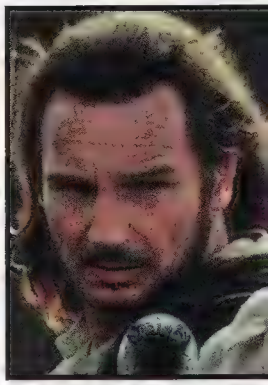
STAR WARS PREQUELS WATCH

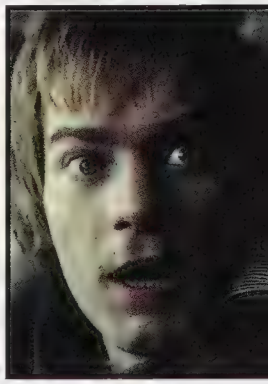
Stardate: May 23, 1999

The date is set, and now, so is the name. On its official Web site, Lucasfilm finally unveiled the long-awaited title to the first "Star Wars" prequel: "Star Wars: Episode 1—The Phantom Menace." We start our long-anticipated prequel countdown with some crystallized facts and tantalizing rumors.

COSMIC TRUTHS: Samuel L. Jackson's Jedi Knight character, Mace Windu, is one of the 12 members who make up the Jedi Council on the planet Coruscant, along with Yoda....A mysterious "Trade Federation" will begin hostilities with the Galactic Republic (the government in place before the Empire came about). This Federation uses "battle droids" for its war machines.... Lucasfilm has shown sketches of the swamp creatures that live on the planet Naboo, believed to be the home planet of Luke and Leia's mother....Boba Fett will not be seen in "Episode 1," but the fan-favorite bounty hunter will play a prominent role in the next prequel (due in 2002).

THE RUMOR MILL: The scenes in the Jedi Council might be to the prequel what the bounty hunters' scene with Bossk, Boba Fett and IG-88 was to "The Empire Strikes Back." Some of the rumored Jedi Council members are said to be cool-looking aliens, including one who uses the Force to levitate small spheres hovering around his body. Another Jedi named Yaddle is said to be of the same race as Yoda, only younger. But the baddest-looking member may be a possible CGI Jedi, a half-man, half-machine named Plo Kun....In the swamps of Naboo, viewers will meet the bizarre-looking alien named Jar Jar Binks. As the story goes, Obi-Wan Kenobi encounters this aquatic alien (known as a Gungan) near a sunken temple. ■ **PATRICK SAURIOL**





STELLAR CAST While (from top) Liam Neeson, Ewan McGregor, Natalie Portman and Jake Lloyd will be spanning the galaxy in "Episode 1," don't count on Boba Fett showing up.

HARSH REALM

'X-Files' creator Chris Carter targets comic for next TV series

The truth is finally out.

No, we're not talking about the whole conspiracy theory on "The X-Files." Nor do we mean the religious fanatics on "Millennium." Uh uh. What we're talking about is "Harsh Realms," creator **Chris Carter**'s newest TV series.

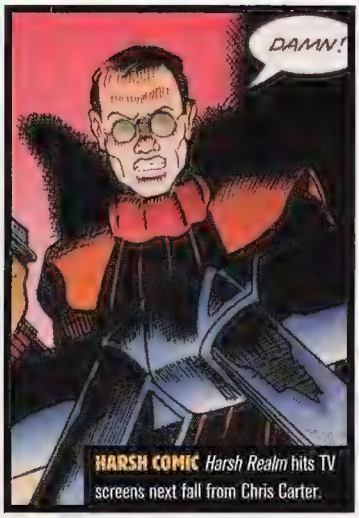
Based on James D. Hudnall's six-issue comic book series from Harris Comics in 1991, "Harsh Realm" is a science-fiction-meets-fantasy story involving different worlds. "In the far future, artificial pocket universes are created, by a computer, that are real, physical universes," explained Hudnall. "Harsh Realm is a universe based on a 'Dungeons and Dragons'-like setting, where magic exists as real, physical laws."

The mini-series followed the investigation of detective Dexter Green, who enters into the Harsh Realm universe to find a missing boy. "Since the world of the future is so overpopulated," said Hudnall, "people go into these worlds and don't come back—either they stay or else something has happened to them. It's the job of Dexter Green to find out what happened to the boy."

Carter's company, Ten Thirteen Productions, has been given a 13-episode commitment by Fox Television and the series will debut on Fox's fall 1999 television schedule. Production is scheduled to start in February with Daniel Sackheim, a veteran director of "X-Files," "E.R" and "N.Y.P.D. Blue" as well as producer of the "X-Files" movie, behind the lens.

With Carter busy writing the pilot and unavailable to comment on how he'll turn the comic's premise into an ongoing television series, Hudnall's left waiting like the rest of us for the outcome.

"My guess is that he would move it a lot closer to the present and not place it as far into the future as the comic. But [the concept] allows room for a lot of ideas so I'm sure he'll work it out." ■ PS



HARSH COMIC *Harsh Realm* hits TV screens next fall from Chris Carter.

FIRE STILL BAD

Universal concocts computer-generated 'Frankenstein' sequel

Mary Shelley was right.

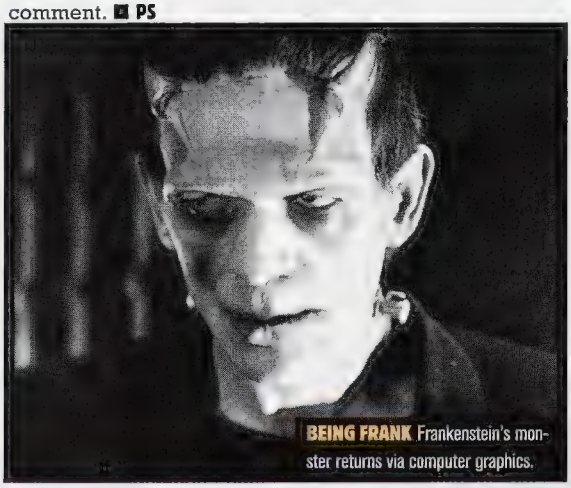
The *Frankenstein* author warned humanity of the dangers of playing with technology, and now technology is breathing life into Frankenstein's monster. Literally.

Universal Pictures has targeted the summer of 2000 for release of the sequel to its classic 1931 black-and-white monster movie, "Frankenstein." But get this: It's being created entirely on computers.

With the resurgence in feature animation and the huge box-office success of other CGI films such as Disney's "Toy Story" and DreamWorks' "Antz," Universal no doubt hopes to cash in on computer-generated box-office rewards. Work on the CGI for the as-yet untitled $80 million "Frankenstein" sequel will take place at George Lucas' Industrial Light & Magic computer-effects division. Brent Maddock and S.S. Wilson (upcoming "The Wild, Wild West") script the tale, with ILM visual-effects supervisor Dave Carson co-directing with Maddock.

Set 40 years after the original "Frankenstein," the sequel takes place in 19th century Eastern Europe. This time, the story concerns the brilliant but eccentric scientist Dr. Pretorius—first introduced in 1935's "Bride of Frankenstein" film—who's just a bit obsessed with improving humanity. Unfortunately, his experiments rely heavily on the electrodes created by Dr. Frankenstein. When the only known surviving electrodes are accidentally destroyed, Pretorius is left with only one option: using the one embedded in the neck of Frankenstein's monster, who supposedly died in a mill fire at the end of the initial film. Pretorius sets off with his associate Rainer in search of the monster's final resting place.

It's also been rumored that another classic Universal monster, the Wolfman, might make a brief cameo. Officials for Universal and ILM declined to comment. ■ PS



BEING FRANK Frankenstein's monster returns via computer graphics.

PHOTO © UNIVERSAL PICTURES, COURTESY OF FOTO FANTASIES.

SOUND BITES

"THE NEXT 'SPAWN' MOVIE HAS TO GO FORWARD. IT HAS TO BE A MUCH BETTER MOVIE."
—*Todd McFarlane (Wizard #77, January 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

BATMAN GOES BAD

West joins campy new Corman television project as a villain

The Dark Knight's a villain? Well, sort of. The campiest Batman of all, **Adam West** from the 1960s "Batman" TV show, is just part of legendary B-movie filmmaker **Roger Corman**'s "Black Scorpion." Corman, known for such horror flicks as "Battle Beyond the Stars" and "Carnosaur," ventures into the realm of comic book heroes with this new syndicated television series set to debut in 1999.

"Black Scorpion" (starring newcomer Michelle Lintel) will feature campy villains, a white Corvette that morphs into the rocket-launching Scorpion Mobile, as well as cameos from Soupy Sales, Frank Gorshin and Adam West. "Adam plays a supervillain in our series, Breathtaker," said Corman, "and he was great. It's been a really fun time. On 'Black Scorpion' we have action, special effects; it's somewhat sexy, and there's humor to it, so everybody's having a good time."

The show came about, weirdly enough, years ago when Corman got an option to do "Spider-Man" for Orion Pictures. When Orion let the option lapse, he thought about creating his own comic book hero. Years later, while creating a series of made-for-cable science-fiction/fantasy films, Corman created "Black Scorpion," a female superhero film starring Joan Severance that aired on Showtime in 1995. The international ratings were exceptional, and when foreign markets began asking for the rights to fashion the movie into an ongoing series, Corman decided to create his own.

Bankrolling the project himself, Corman is shooting 22 one-hour episodes, a full year's commitment, before even attempting to sell the series to television. The earliest the series will hit is spring of '99, and Corman anticipates an eventual sale to syndication rather than a major network.

"Black Scorpion's costume and some of the supervillains have fairly brief costumes," Corman said with a laugh. "My understanding is, this is acceptable for cable or syndication, but probably not for networks." ■ **SCOTT BRICK**

HARD-CORMAN "Black Scorpion" expands to a TV series.

TRAILERS...

LIGHTS... CAMERA... ACTION?

THE CROW

SOMETHING TO CROW ABOUT: Rob Zombie's script for a third "Crow" film, titled "The Crow 2037: World of Gods and Monsters" may have been passed on, but filming starts in February for "The Crow: Salvation," a $10 million production scheduled for release in late '99. Based on a screenplay by Chip Johannessen ("Millennium"), the latest Crow will be a 20-year-old man put to death in the electric chair for a crime he didn't commit. Once resurrected, he begins hunting down those who framed him.

DEAD MEN IN BLACK: "Men in Black" raked in $200 million as 1997's biggest summer blockbuster, but don't count on a sequel. "I don't think it will happen," said "MiB" director Barry Sonnenfeld. "I think it will be too expensive to make."

The TV program "Access Hollywood" previously reported that stars Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones were seeking $20 million to return for a sequel based on the Marvel comic. Another factor working against a sequel is time. "They're so long and painful to do," Sonnenfeld said. "From the day I started pre-production to the day the movie came out took two years. That's a long time to be involved in one project. Especially in the case of something you've done already."

PSYCHOTIC FROGS: The pilot for a proposed "Joe Psycho & Moo Frog" cartoon series based on the comic from Goblin Entertainment has been screened for MTV Animation executives and test audiences. According to the show's creators at Straytjakit Productions, the pilot attracted the attention of other curious entertainment companies including The Cartoon Network and The Jim Henson Company.

NIGHTCRAWLER? NEIN!: Screenwriter Chris McQuarrie handed in his first revision of the "X-Men" script in October. While Fox and director Bryan Singer liked the changes, they asked for additional tweaks. Once the script is approved, casting will begin. Rumors that Chris Kattan ("A Night at the Roxbury") is up for the role of Nightcrawler are completely false–everyone's favorite teleporting elf isn't even on the roster.

NIGHTCRAWLER

SHORT TAKES: "Batman Beyond" has been pushed back to sometime next year....Top Cow's live-action "Witchblade" TV series is still in the process of casting its lead....The latest script for "The Fantastic Four" movie by Sam Hamm ("Batman") has put smiles on the faces at Twentieth Century Fox....Comedians Ben Stiller and Greg Kinnear are the latest superhero additions to Bob Burden's comic-turned-movie "Mystery Men," due out next summer....Universal is getting Robert De Niro to play Fearless Leader in a live-action "Rocky and Bullwinkle" film....."Sabrina the Animated Series" will appear weekdays next fall, with Melissa Joan Hart ("Sabrina the Teenage Witch") voicing teen-age versions of Aunts Zelda and Hilda, while Hart's younger sister Emily plays the junior-high version of Sabrina....Producer Lawrence Kasanoff ("Mortal Kombat") is relaunching the canceled "Conan" series, promising to make it darker and more like the first movie. ■ **PS, DP and JP**

BLACK SCORPION PHOTO COURTESY CONCORDE-NEW HORIZONS. CROW PHOTO BY ROBERT ZUCKERMAN COURTESY DREAMWORK FILMS.

BASIC TRAINING

SCOTT McCLOUD TAKES ON

COMICS AND COMPUTERS

THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL INSTRUCTOR

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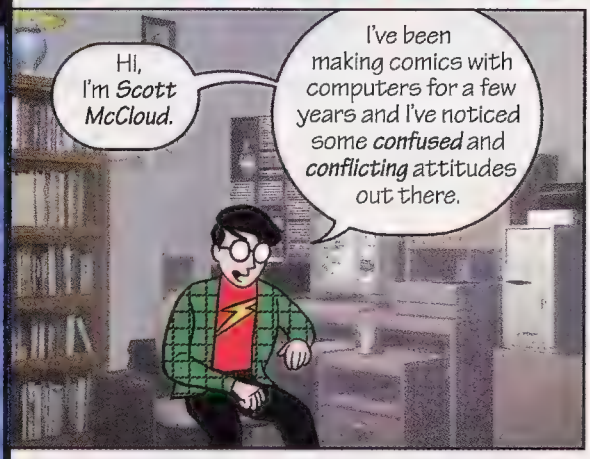
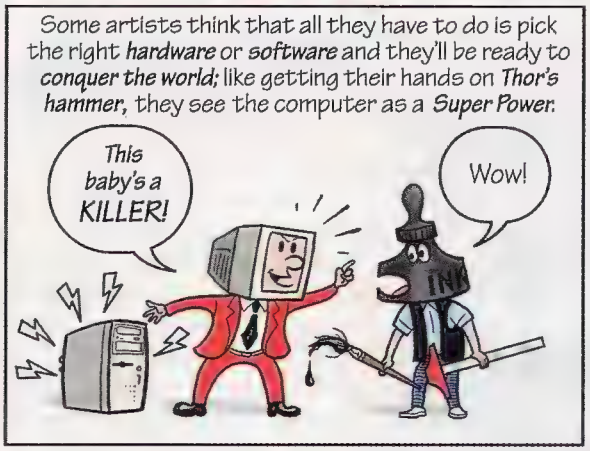
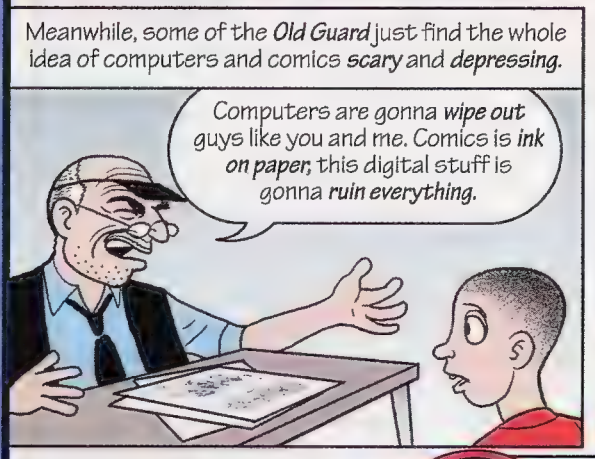
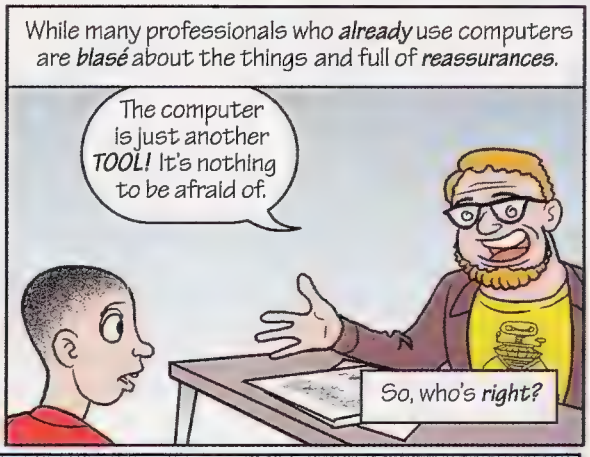
Scott McCloud





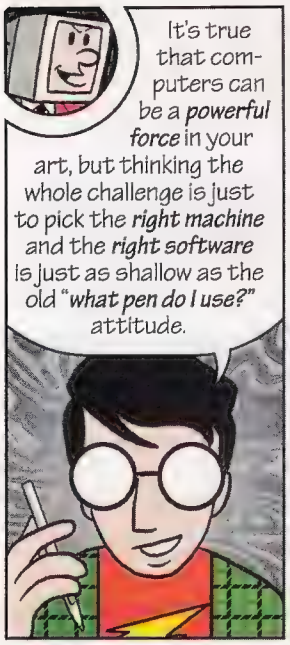


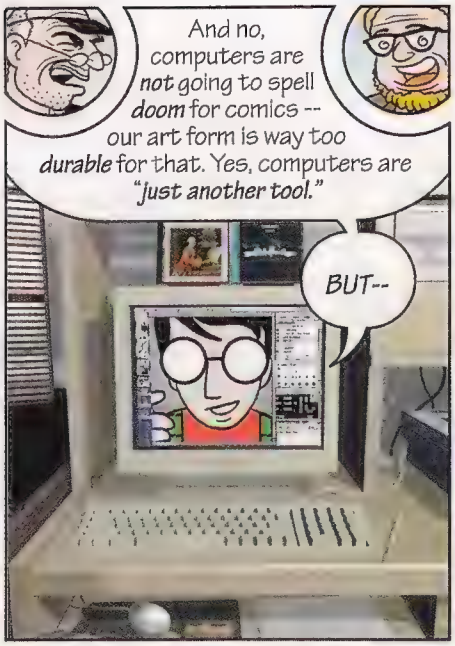


SOUND BITES

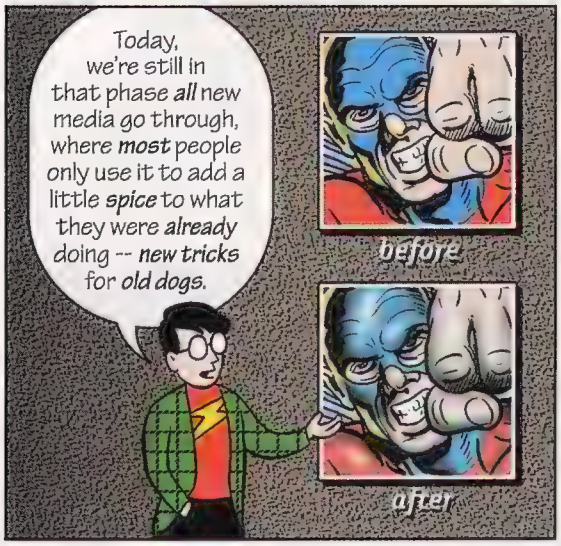
"I FEEL GUILTY IF I SCREW WITH OTHER WRITERS' PLANS FOR THEIR OWN TITLES."
—*Peter David on quitting* Incredible Hulk *when told to write plots that would have broader ramifications (*Wizard *#82, June 1998)*

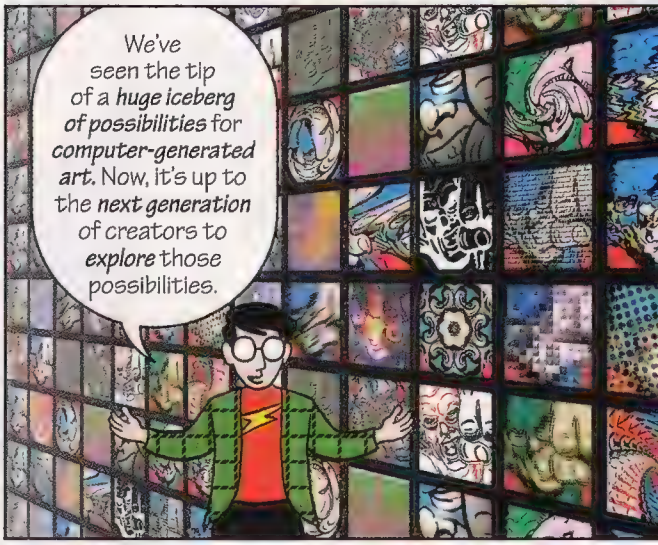
THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998

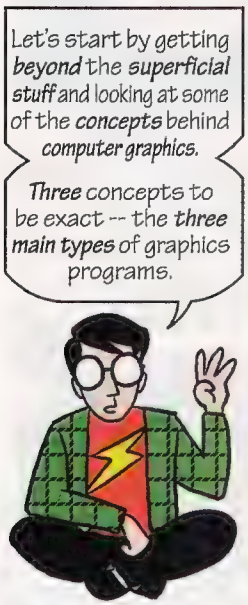

It's true that computers can be a *powerful force* in your art, but thinking the whole challenge is just to pick the *right machine* and the *right software* is just as shallow as the old "*what pen do I use?*" attitude.


And no, computers are *not* going to spell *doom* for comics -- our art form is way too *durable* for that. Yes, computers are "*just another tool.*"
BUT--

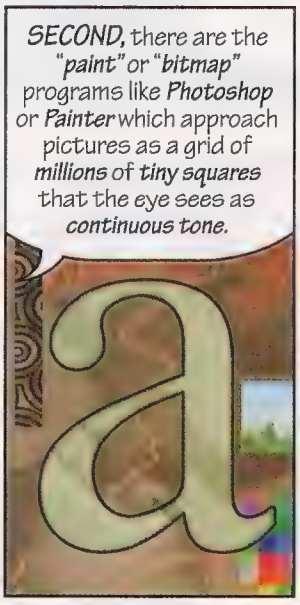
--that's "*just another tool*" like the *WHEEL* was just another tool; like the *PRINTING PRESS* was just another tool. Y'see, even though comics will survive, the Old Guard is right about this much: computers *are* going to *change everything!*


Today, we're still in that phase *all* new media go through, where *most* people only use it to add a little *spice* to what they were *already* doing -- *new tricks* for *old dogs.*
before
after

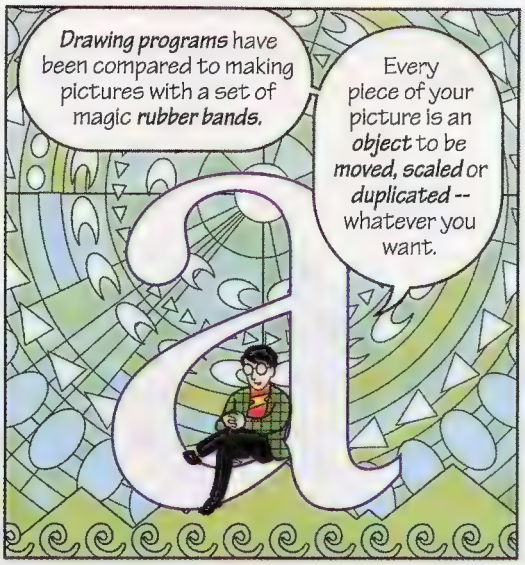

We've seen the tip of a *huge iceberg of possibilities* for *computer-generated art.* Now, it's up to the *next generation* of creators to *explore* those possibilities.

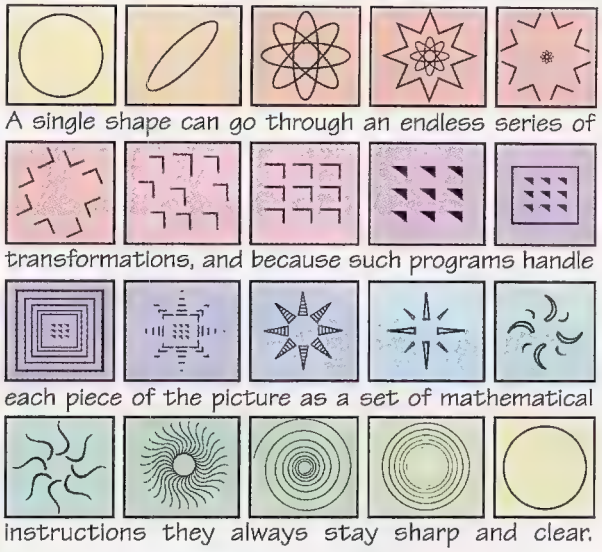

Let's start by getting *beyond* the *superficial stuff* and looking at some of the *concepts* behind *computer graphics.*
Three concepts to be exact -- the *three main types* of graphics programs.

FIRST, there are the so-called *"drawing"* or *"vector"* programs like *Illustrator* or *Freehand* that create lines and shapes as mathematically defined *objects* -- just the way you'd *expect* a computer to draw!

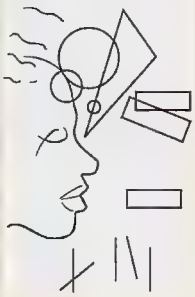

SECOND, there are the *"paint"* or *"bitmap"* programs like *Photoshop* or *Painter* which approach pictures as a grid of *millions* of *tiny squares* that the eye sees as *continuous tone.*

THIRD, there are the various *"3-D Modeling"* programs which combine *"draw"* and *"paint"* features in a wholly *new* form of art that can simulate the *depth, light* and *shadows* of the *real world.*

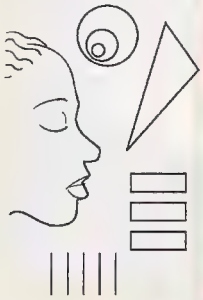


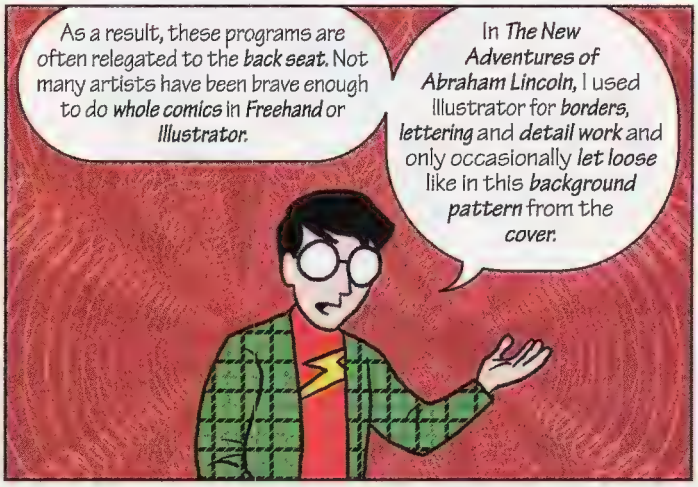


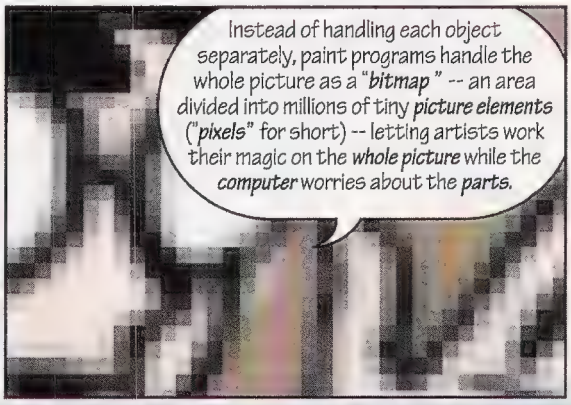
And no matter what kind of mess you make, you can always fix it, *move* it, "*undo*" it.



The world of drawing programs can be a *cold* and *precise* one. Maybe a bit *too* precise for some.



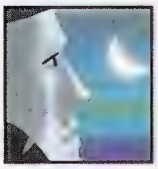


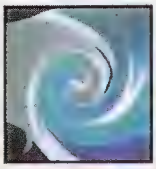


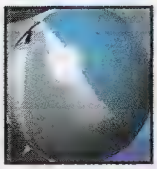
SOUND BITES

"*SPAWN* IS MY BABY. I'LL NEVER SEVER MY TIES WITH THE BOOK. BUT I'VE GOT TO MOVE IN OTHER DIRECTIONS, TOO."
—*Todd McFarlane (Wizard #83, July 1998)*

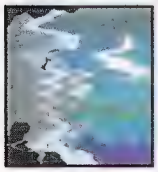
THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998

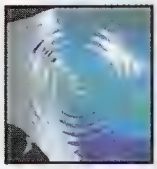


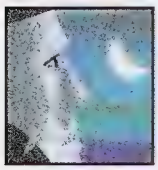


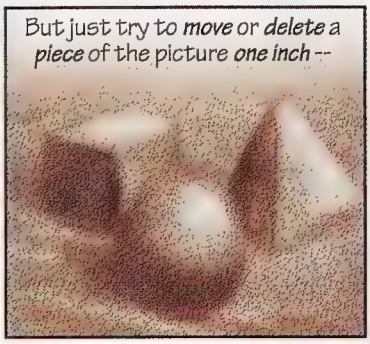


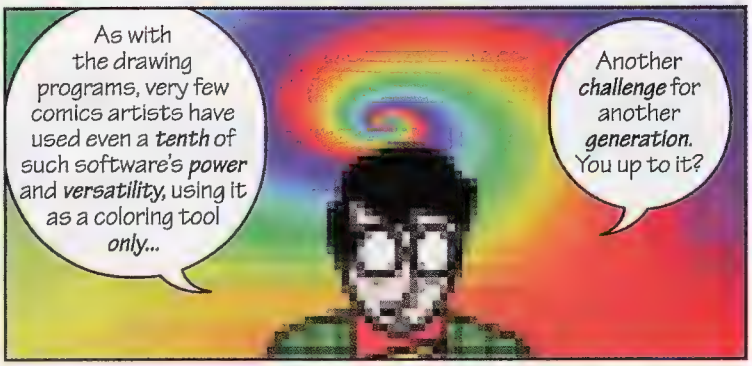
Blurring, Blending, Twirling, Rippling, Colorizing... Paint programs do them all with *ease.*









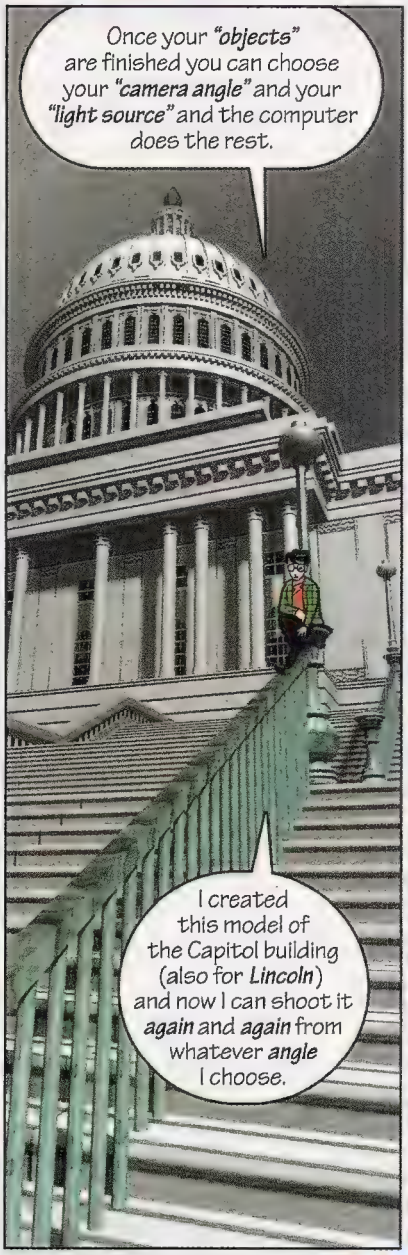


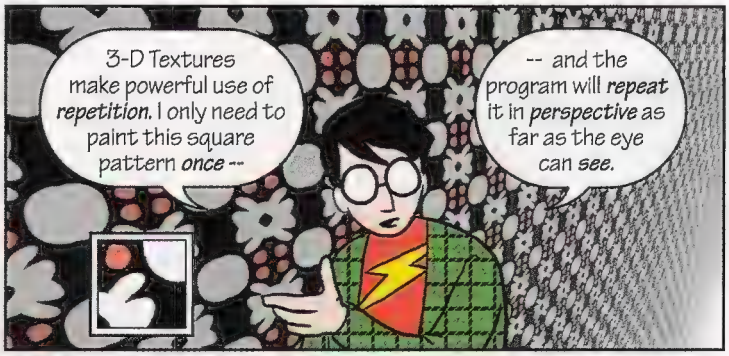
Some of these *"wireframes"* are made by *twirling* a shape around an *axis* like *clay* on a *potter's wheel.*

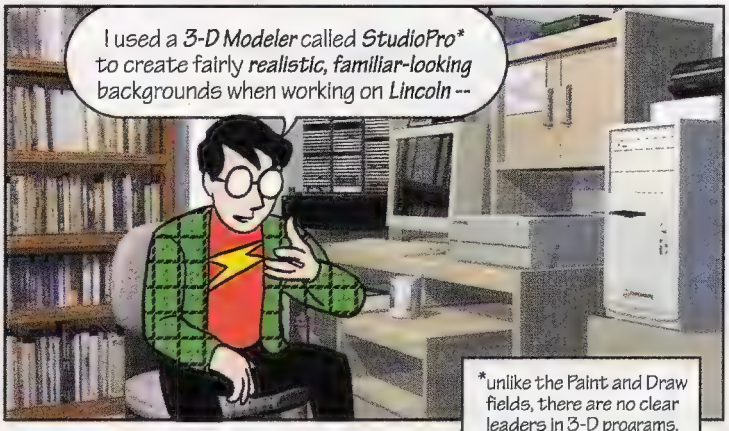
Others by *"extruding"* a flat shape in one direction like a *cookie-cutter* or *Play-Doh Fun Factory.*

And still others by combining *basic shapes* that come *pre-made,* like *building blocks* or *modular furniture.*

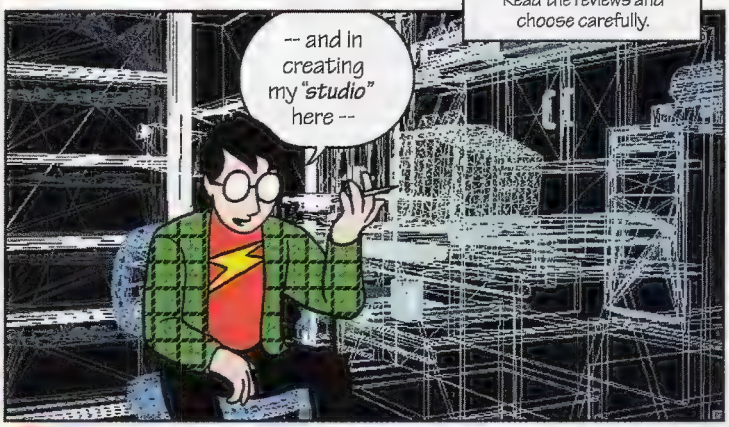
The *wireframe shapes* are now wrapped in *textures* and *patterns* that have been created as *bitmaps* by *paint programs,* like a wire sculpture wrapped in *painted cloth.*







*unlike the Paint and Draw fields, there are no clear leaders in 3-D programs. Read the reviews and choose carefully.



SOUND BITES — THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998

"EVERYONE WONDERS WHERE THE NEXT GENERATION OF COMICS READERS ARE—BUT THEY'RE READING *SONIC THE HEDGEHOG.*"

—*Image's Jim Valentino on the Sonic/Image characters crossover (CSN 585)*

What's that? "*What about the Web?*" Oh, please... I got *SIX PAGES*, here! Heck, I'm writing a *200-page book* about this stuff and trying to figure out how to fit all my ideas about the Internet into it. So you'll have to wait a while for *Re-Inventing Comics* -- out in *1999!*

CONTEST

WIZARD ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS:

The Sixth Annual Scavenger Hunt!

PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

INCREDIBLE PRIZES PROVIDED BY:

$2,500

That number get your attention? Good. That's the dollar amount attached to the monster kick-ass prizes that fuel this year's "Scavenger Hunt" contest. One killer grand prize, 10 almost-as-good runner-ups and 100 honorable mentions. That's more than 100 ways to win. So whattaya waitin' for? While you're busy readin' this, everybody else has already started the hunt...

GRAND PRIZE (1):

One incredibly diligent hunter (that means the person with the highest point total) wins this prize package worthy of a pirate's treasure chest:

- A Pioneer DVD player with 10 Pioneer anime DVDs to watch on it, including "Dragon Ball Z," "Ranma 1/2" and others
- A PlayStation video game system with 10 kick-ass Electronic Arts video games
- A complete clothing outfit from JNCO including a hat, jeans, sneakers and T-shirt
- The super-cool new JNCO comics: *Flamehead* #1, *Goop* #1, *Burner* #1 and a Flamehead sticker
- A JNCO skateboard ready for rippin'
- A complete set of four South Park standees from Palisades Marketing—including Kyle, Cartman, Stan and Kenny
- A set of Scully and Mulder X-Files statues from Dark Horse Comics
- A Ghost action figure
- The Kingdom Come Superman statue from DC Comics
- An Ultra Pro comic book binder and comic book protector
- A Hellboy statue from Bowen Designs
- A Draco the dragon from "Dragonheart" statue and a bunch of neato Christmas ornaments from Moore Creations
- Some cool Nerf guns to shoot your friends
- A copy of the hard-to-find *Darkchylde Ace Edition*
- A complete set of four Witchblade action figures and four Chaos! action figures
- Three exclusive *ToyFare* action figures: Wonder Man, Firestar and Geordi
- A copy of the variant edition *Boba Fett* #1/2

You juiced yet? Good. Now that you know what's up for grabs, turn the page to see what you gotta do to pocket alla this loot...

RUNNER-UP (10):

The next 10 highest totals each win this goodie bag full of groovy stuff:

- A JNCO T-shirt, hat, *Flamehead* #1, *Goop* #1 and *Burner* #1 comic book, and a Flamehead sticker
- A random Electronic Arts PlayStation video game
- A "Crimson Blade" VHS cassette and Hakkenden T-shirt from Pioneer Entertainment (USA) L.P.
- A complete set of four South Park standees from Palisades Marketing—including Kyle, Cartman, Stan and Kenny
- An Ultra Pro comic book binder and comic book protector
- An assorted mini-bust from Bowen Designs. You'll get either Storm, Marv from Sin City, Man-Thing, Arzach, Hulk, Thor, Cyclops, Ant-Man, or Deadpool
- A Ghost action figure from Dark Horse Comics
- One Chaos! action figure and one Witchblade action figure
- A Nerf gun to shoot your friends
- A copy of the hard-to-find *Darkchylde Ace Edition*
- Three exclusive *ToyFare* action figures: Wonder Man, Firestar and Geordi
- A copy of the variant edition *Boba Fett* #1/2

HONORABLE MENTION (100):

One-hundred scavengers, chosen at random from every entry received with a point total more than 75, each score this loot:

- An X-Men pen holder from Laser Mach
- A copy of *Flamehead* #1, *Goop* #1 and *Burner* #1 and a Flamehead sticker from JNCO
- A set of six mini-standees from Palisades Marketing
- An assortment of comics from Dark Horse Comics
- An Ultra Pro comic book binder and comic book protector
- A copy of the hard-to-find *Darkchylde Ace Edition*
- Three exclusive *ToyFare* action figures: Wonder Man, Firestar and Geordi
- A copy of the variant edition *Boba Fett* #1/2

Wanna get your hands on those fabulous prizes? Of course you do. Here's how:

Below is a list of 75 things to find, shoot, answer and do. Each item has a point value next to it. Your mission is to collect as many points as possible by hunting down the items, taking the photos, answering the questions and doing what needs to be done. When you've got a huge stack of stuff in your living room, put it all in one box (emphasis on ONE) and send it all in to us. Be sure to include the official "Scavenger Hunt" checklist card that came with this issue. You get five points just for filling it out. The person with the highest point total wins the grand prize. In the case of a tie, we'll choose randomly. We'll then take the next highest 10 totals and make them the runner-up winners. And just so you don't cry, everyone that wasn't one of those winners that had at least 75 points will be put into a random drawing and 100 people will be our honorable mention winners. **Happy hunting!**

Stuff to Find and points:

1) Pair of pointy Spock ears **(4)**
2) Toy from any fast-food restaurant **(2)**
3) Magnet in the shape of a toilet **(6)** (Three extra points if it makes a flushing sound!)
4) Drink coaster with a leprechaun on it **(6)**
5) Toy of a famous TV/movie/animated vehicle **(3)**
6) Coffee mug in the shape of something other than a coffee mug **(5)**
7) Drumstick (Put that chicken down! We mean the musical instrument, not the food.) **(4)**
8) Polka-dotted marble **(7)**
9) One-color cocktail umbrella (That means no weird designs or patterns!) **(6)**
10) Hostess ad featuring a superhero (And, as much as we'd like em, DON'T send Ho-Ho's with your entry. They'll get squished and bleed cream-filling all over everything.) **(3)**
11) Iron-on/sew-on patch having something to do with that most evil of decades, the '70s **(3)**
12) Scratch-and-sniff stickers (And we WILL smell 'em!) **(4)**
13) Plastic utensil with a fast-food name/logo on it **(2)**(Double-points if you get a full set: knife, fork and spoon!)
14) Sheet music from any big-hair '80s song **(4)** (Minus five points if it's by Winger.)
15) All-black birthday candle **(7)**
16) Non-white golf ball **(3)**
17) Incense stick **(2)**
18) Mini-golf score sheet in which you are the winner **(4)**
19) Yoo-Hoo bottle cap **(2)**
20) Piece of mail with the words "You may already be a winner" on it (Or something worded real similar-like.) **(5)**
21) Postcard with an alligator on it **(3)** (Three extra points if it's eating something!)
22) Airplane sick bag (EMPTY!) **(2)**
23) One o' them round li'l discs with the hole and two curvy lines in it from those keen disc guns–you know the kind! **(4)**
24) Penny from the year 1984 **(5)**
25) Any Mr. Potato Head part **(3)**
26) Cracker Jack prize still in the wrapper **(4)**
27) Chinese takeout menu with a picture of a dragon on it **(5)**
28) Bazooka comic without dialogue between the characters **(7)**
29) Fortune from fortune cookie with the lucky number "12" **(5)**
30) Gas receipt for eight cents **(6)**
31) Matchbook with a turtle on it **(5)**
32) Lobster bib with more than one lobster on it **(5)**
33) Chinese finger trap **(4)**
34) An issue of *Shang-Chi, Master of Kung Fu* **(3)**
35) A blue movie ticket stub **(8)**
36) Photo of the WCW Nitro girls **(6)**
37) Something with that damn Taco Bell dog on it **(3)**
38) Purple shoelace **(3)**
39) A piece of blank stationary from a law office **(8)**
40) Something with the Phantom on it that reads "Slam Evil!" **(3)**
41) Camouflage Band-Aid **(2)**
42) An Atari Jaguar game **(5)**
43) Brown balloon **(4)**
44) Canned-food product that has the ingredient "beef fat" **(6)**
45) "Hooooo!" Any Thundercats toy (But no Snarfs!) **(6)**
46) A super-ball that looks like an eight-ball **(5)**
47) Something with Donnie and Marie on it **(4)**
48) An eraser in the shape of a fruit **(3)**
49) Green bubble-blower **(2)**
50) Non-English bumper-sticker **(4)**
51) Bookmark with a hot babe on it **(5)**
52) "Do Not Disturb" sign for a doorknob **(3)**
53) Something weird that glows in the dark (And we mean WEIRD!) **(4)**
54) Travel brochure for Transylvania **(6)**
55) Unsharpened Ticonderoga #2 pencil **(2)**
56) Crazy Straw **(3)**
57) Vanilla-scented candle **(3)**
58) Key chain with a state name on it **(3)**
59) Anything that says "Crack is Whack!" **(2)**
60) Unused bar of Ivory Soap **(3)**
61) Computer disk **(2)**
62) A piece of jigsaw puzzle the color of the sky **(3)**
63) Pen that writes in a color other than blue, black or red **(2)**
64) The *Wizard* Scavenger Hunt checklist from this issue, with your name address and all the items you found marked off **(5)**

Stuff to Shoot and points

65) A photo you took of a fat guy eating pie (And we mean FAT! At least 300 lbs.!) **(6)**
66) Photo of you in a very public place (with people about), wearing a VERY embarrassing outfit, reading *Wizard* #89 **(6)**
67) A photo with you and a celebrity or quasi-celebrity (Send proof that he/she/it is a quasi-celebrity...news clippings featuring them, etc.) **(7)**
68) Photo of you with a duck **(5)**

Stuff to Answer and points

69) Who is J. Fred Muggs? **(5)**
70) What does Rip Taylor throw in the air when he yells "It's funny!"? **(5)**
71) What's the name of Boss Hogg's wife from the "Dukes of Hazzard"? **(5)**
72) What is MacGyver's first name? **(5)**
73) What was Michael Knight's real name before he became Michael Knight? **(5)**

Stuff to Do and points

74) Cartoon strip of your favorite *Wizard* employee **(5)**
75) What page number is this icon hidden on in this issue of *Wizard* **(7)**

HURRY!

Deadline is JANUARY 29, 1999!

"Scavenger Hunt" Important Do's and Dont's

1. Use only one package to send everything in, no matter how big it is. If you send in more than one, we'll count each as a separate entry and you won't have a chance.

2. Use the Official "Scavenger Hunt" checklist that came in this issue. It's worth five points just to fill it out.

3. Do not send multiples of each item. You can only score the points one time.

4. Send your entry to:

"*WIZARD* SCAVENGER HUNT VI!"
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920

RAIDERS OF THE LOST LEGAL

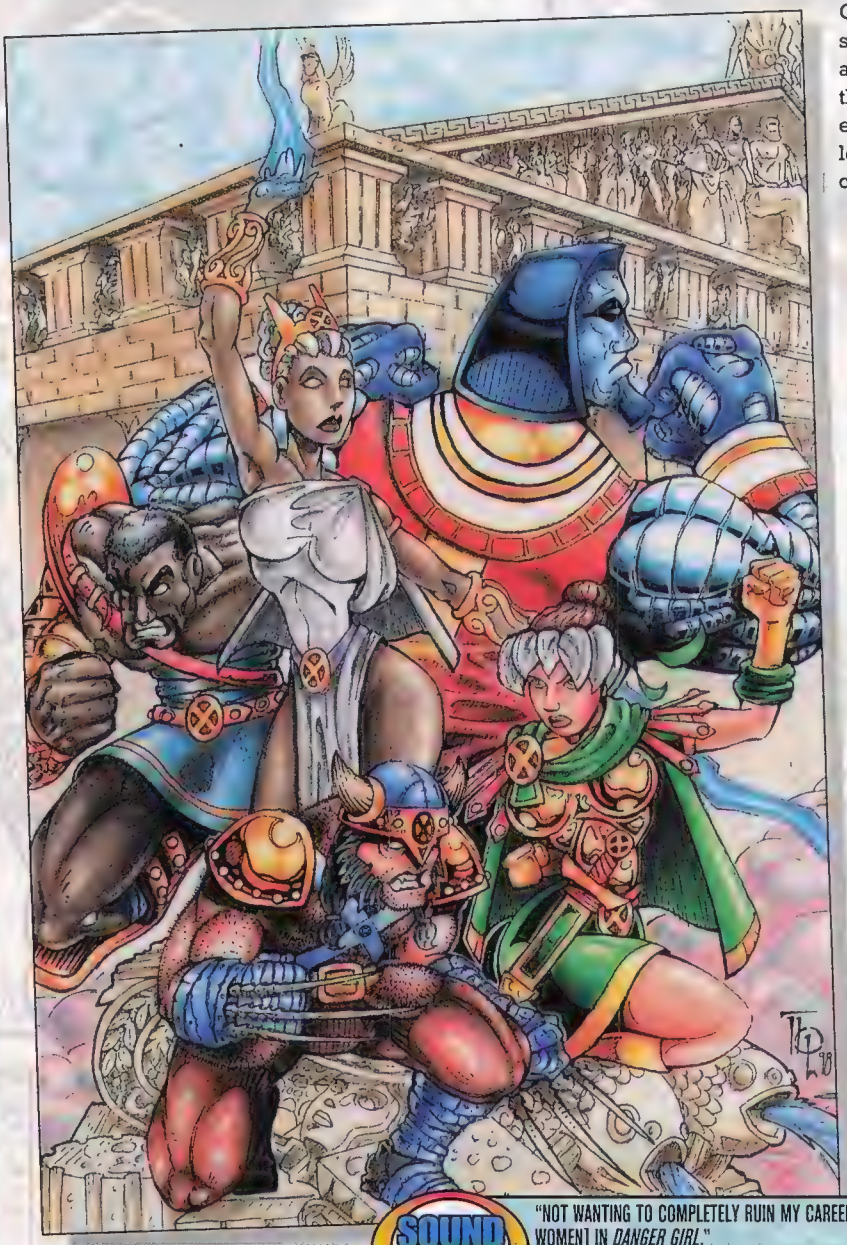
No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, Bowen Designs, Dark Horse Comics, DC Comics, Electronic Arts, Hasbro, JNCO, Laser Mach, Moore Creations, Palisades Marketing, Pioneer, Ultra Pro, their immediate families and anyone who supports trickle down economics. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, e-mail address and telephone number with area code on the official Scavenger Hunt checklist card or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Each entry must be mailed in a single, secured package or envelope. Each package will be considered a separate entry. Small items should be taped to an index card to avoid loss during shipping. All Scavenger Hunt questions must be answered on the Scavenger Hunt Checklist card or on a single, separate sheet of paper. All photos become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. Mail each entry separately to: "*Wizard* Scavenger Hunt VI!," c/o Wizard Entertainment, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920. No mechanical reproductions of completed Checklist cards are accepted, but you can photocopy the Checklist card before filling it out if you don't want to mess it up. All entries and all rights relating thereto become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by January 29, 1999.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Winners will be selected from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Entertainment based on greatest point total with random drawing breaking all ties. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be notified no later than March 19, 1999. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. If necessary, a drawing will held on or about February 12, 1999 to determine a winner.

For a list of winners, available after March 19, 1999, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "*Wizard* Scavenger Hunt VI!" Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Drawing BOARD

Who needs the pros? This is the show for WIZARD READERS' ART

The X-Men are known for their occasional time-travelin' exploits. And for *Wizard* #85's "A New Era for X-Men!" contest, we wanted your interpretation of any X-Men lineup if the team lived in any time period other than the 1990s. The mutant reader who wins the grand prize receives a Wolverine Unmasked cold-cast statue, a copy of *The Essential X-Men* #1 and #2, an X-Men T-shirt, an X-Men key chain and the *X-Men: The Ravages of Apocalypse* total *Quake* conversation PC CD-ROM game! One lovely first-prize winner is shipped the above minus the statue and game. Our six runners-up snag the T-shirt and key chain. No more excuses for walking to school topless just 'cause you couldn't find a clean shirt or the car keys!



GRAND-PRIZE WINNER

THIS ONE CAUGHT OUR EYE

ANCIENT X-MEN

JORGE ERNESTO CORRAL JACOBSON, Mexico City, Mexico

THE BOOTY

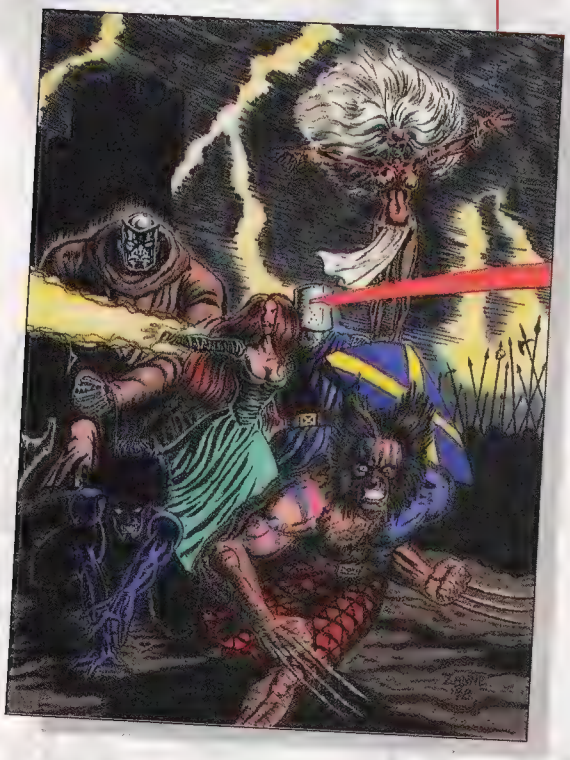
SOUND BITES — THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"NOT WANTING TO COMPLETELY RUIN MY CAREER, I REALIZED I HAD TO [HAVE ATTRACTIVE WOMEN] IN *DANGER GIRL*."
—*J. Scott Campbell (Wizard #78, February 1998)*

AGE OF GANGSTERS
IVAN F. MARCHENA JR., Coral Gables, Fla.

GLADIATOR X-MEN
SHANE COLCLOUGH, Charlottesville, Va.

MEDIEVAL X-MEN
ZANNE CHRISTOS, Newburgh, N.Y.



WILD WEST X
MICHAEL DIMAYUGA, Virginia Beach, Va.

HONORABLEMENTIONS

Drawing Board

KNIGHTS OF THE X-TABLE
DARRYL VINSON, Houston, Texas

ANCIENT X-GYPTIANS
TRACY BREHM, Quartz Hill, Calif.

GEORGES SEURAT DOTS THE X-MEN
BRIANNA FRANK, Des Moines, Iowa

SUBMIT!

Want your art to appear on one of these three pages in future issues? Think you've got what it takes? (Hey—quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Then send your "Drawing Board" entries to:

Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. **You must also include two color photos of yourself** (no Polaroids, please). All entries are nonreturnable and become the property of Wizard Entertainment. Employees of Wizard Entertainment are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? All right, good luck!

SOUND BITES
THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"I JUST PLAIN LIKE TO DRAW BIG KNOCKERS."
—*Erik Larsen, Savage Dragon creator (Wizard #82, June 1998)*

The legend lives again.

IN IRELAND, THERE IS A LEGEND. IT SPEAKS OF AN ANCIENT DEFENDER THAT ROSE TO PROTECT THE EMERALD ISLE AGES AGO IN ITS DARKEST HOUR.

A THREAT FROM THE PAST HAS RISEN, AND A YOUNG ORPHAN GIRL NAMED DERDRE HAS BEEN NAMED THE NEW PROTECTOR.

CREATED AND WRITTEN BY SHARON SCOTT WITH ART AND COLOR BY STEVE FIRCHOW

SHE WILL NEED TO BE MORE THAN BRAVE TO DEFEND HER PEOPLE AND MORE THAN STRONG TO STAY ALIVE. TO BE VICTORIOUS, DERDRE WILL NEED TO BE...

BI-MONTHLY FROM LIAR COMICS

CLIFFHANGER PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS:

ART CONTEST

Danger Girl™ Variant Cover!

PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE (1): One super-spy wins an original page of J. Scott Campbell *Danger Girl* artwork, one copy of every *Danger Girl* comic produced (including the variants and oversized issues) signed by the creative team, plus the winning entry will be featured in a future issue of *Danger Girl*.

FIRST PRIZE (2): Two Danger Readers each win one copy of every *Danger Girl* comic produced, including the variants and oversized issues signed by the *Danger Girl* creative team.

SECOND PRIZE (5): Five undercover agents each win the latest issue and the oversized issues of *Danger Girl* signed by the creative team.

HERE'S WHAT YOU DO. Using the right side of your brain, draw a *Danger Girl* variant cover. Use any of the characters from the comic, in any setting you like. Just make it look good. And just remember, the Danger Girls are all super-spies, so playing up that theme can't hurt. Oh, and just so you know, the winning artwork is not gonna be used as an actual cover.

When you're done drawing your cover, fill out the entry form below, attach it to the back of your drawing and send it in. Also, be sure to include two photos of yourself with the entry. Each photo (no Polaroids, please) should include your full name, date of birth, telephone number and address on the back. The most creative artists get the prizes and get featured in the pages of *Wizard*. Submissions can be on any form of unlined paper or posterboard and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, marker, etc.). Neon inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8"x 11 1/4". Do not fold, bend or roll artwork. Mail flat.

PRIZES FOR THIS CONTEST PROVIDED BY OUR GOOD BUDDY JEFF SCOTT CAMPBELL. YOU GOTTA LOVE THAT GUY!

DANGEROUS LEGALESE

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, DC Comics, their immediate families and James Bond. Dude, your moves better get better or those Danger Girl chicks'll take over. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, e-mail address and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card with your two photos to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "Danger Girl Variant Cover!" Art Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries and all rights thereto become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by January 29, 1999.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Winners will be selected based on originality and creativity by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be notified no later than March 5, 1999. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, our own group of super-spies will stalk you and humiliate you in front of all your friends and another entry will be selected. We're talking about a wedgie of legendary proportion. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about February 12, 1999.

For a list of winners, available after February 12, 1999, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "Danger Girl Variant Cover!" Art Contest Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

™ & © J. Scott Campbell, 1998. Cliffhanger is a trademark of DC Comics.

ENTER NOW!

Fill this out, attach your entry and photos and put it all in an envelope. Send it to:

"Danger Girl Variant Cover!"
Art Contest,
c/o Wizard Entertainment,
P.O. Box 118,
Congers, NY 10920-0118

"Danger Girl Variant Cover!" Art Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE JANUARY 29, 1999!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

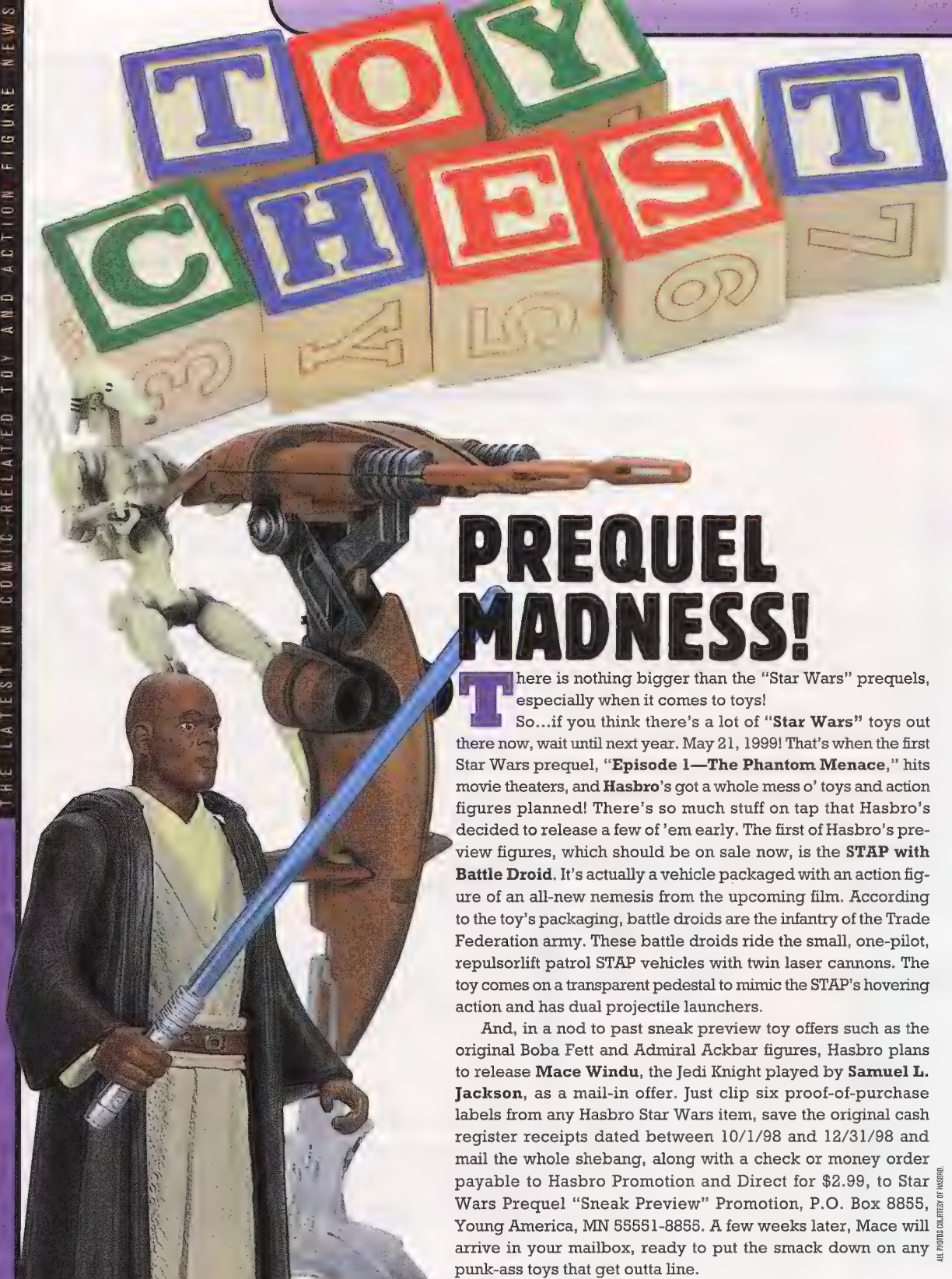
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-Mail Address _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

DID YOU ATTACH YOUR ENTRY AND PHOTOS?

TOY CHEST



PREQUEL MADNESS!

There is nothing bigger than the "Star Wars" prequels, especially when it comes to toys!

So...if you think there's a lot of **"Star Wars"** toys out there now, wait until next year. May 21, 1999! That's when the first Star Wars prequel, **"Episode 1—The Phantom Menace,"** hits movie theaters, and **Hasbro**'s got a whole mess o' toys and action figures planned! There's so much stuff on tap that Hasbro's decided to release a few of 'em early. The first of Hasbro's preview figures, which should be on sale now, is the **STAP with Battle Droid**. It's actually a vehicle packaged with an action figure of an all-new nemesis from the upcoming film. According to the toy's packaging, battle droids are the infantry of the Trade Federation army. These battle droids ride the small, one-pilot, repulsorlift patrol STAP vehicles with twin laser cannons. The toy comes on a transparent pedestal to mimic the STAP's hovering action and has dual projectile launchers.

And, in a nod to past sneak preview toy offers such as the original Boba Fett and Admiral Ackbar figures, Hasbro plans to release **Mace Windu**, the Jedi Knight played by **Samuel L. Jackson**, as a mail-in offer. Just clip six proof-of-purchase labels from any Hasbro Star Wars item, save the original cash register receipts dated between 10/1/98 and 12/31/98 and mail the whole shebang, along with a check or money order payable to Hasbro Promotion and Direct for $2.99, to Star Wars Prequel "Sneak Preview" Promotion, P.O. Box 8855, Young America, MN 55551-8855. A few weeks later, Mace will arrive in your mailbox, ready to put the smack down on any punk-ass toys that get outta line.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF HASBRO.

PREQUEL TOYS! Bad-ass Jedi Knight Mace Windu (immediate left) and the STAP with Battle Droid are the first sights of the highly anticipated Star Wars prequels.

BY TOM PALMER JR.

SOUND BITES

"AS SOON AS THEY DO THE JAY AND SILENT BOB ACTION FIGURES THEN I KNOW I'M FULFILLED; I'VE LIVED THE ULTIMATE FANBOY'S LIFE."
—Kevin Smith (Wizard #80, April 1998). The action figures went on sale in October.

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

More Star Wars...Marvel heroes battle video games...plus the best of 1998!

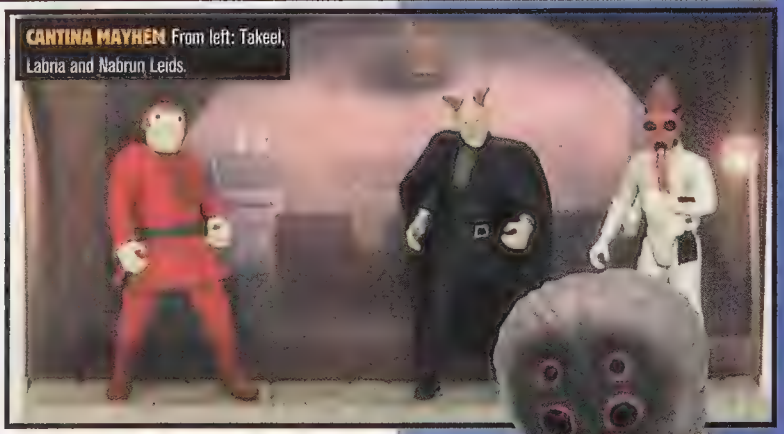
GANG'S ALL HERE From left: Darth Vader with lightsaber, R2-D2 with launching lightsaber, Ben Kenobi, Luke Skywalker with blaster rifle and electrobinoculars, Yoda with cane and boiling pot, Leia in ceremonial dress, Chewbacca with bowcaster and Emperor with Dark Force lightning.

STAR WARS CLASSIC

If you're grumpy and set in your ways and don't care in any way, shape, or form about this *new* Star Wars crap, Hasbro's got you covered too.

Right in time for Christmas, look for all-new versions of familiar "Star Wars" characters with a special *preview* of their counterparts from "The Phantom Menace." The first of these figures include **Luke Skywalker** with Blaster Rifle & Electrobinoculars, **Ben (Obi-Wan) Kenobi**, **Yoda** with Cane and Boiling Pot, **Chewbacca** with Bowcaster, **Darth Vader** with Lightsaber, **Emperor Palpatine** with Dark Force Lightning, **R2-D2** with Launching Lightsaber and **Princess Leia** in Ceremonial Dress with Ceremonial Medal of Honor. Each of these figures features a special "Flashback Card" illustrating how these characters correspond to characters in "The Phantom Menace." With a pull on a special tab, a picture of Luke Skywalker transforms into a picture of a young Anakin Skywalker, making everyone happy. Look for at least one more set of tab-happy toys before Hasbro's "Phantom Menace" toys show up.

And if your tastes turn towards some of classic aliens from "Star Wars," Hasbro's got something for ya, too. **Kabe & Muftak** arrive as a two-pack available over the Internet at Hasbro's "Star Wars" Web site, starwars.hasbro.com. In addition, the Classic Cantina Multipack, available everywhere, offers up **Takeel**, **Nabrun Leids** and **Labria**. Wanna know who these guys are? Just look at the pictures on this page—you're sure to recognize 'em from the movies!



CANTINA MAYHEM From left: Takeel, Labria and Nabrun Leids.

MICE AND MONSTERS Star Wars Cantina aliens Kabe (left) and Muftak are available through Hasbro's Web site.

PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHRADER

WISH LIST

THE 30 OR SO FIGURES WIZARD HAS HELPED MAKE

FEEL THE POWER OF "WISH LIST"!

Every month we give you, the toy buying public, the chance to make your voice heard to the bigwigs at the toy companies through this here "Wish List." And it looks like they've been taking your ideas to heart. Almost 30 "Wish List" contenders made the jump to toys in the past year, and it looks like '99 will have favorites we thought we'd never see such as Wonder Woman and Havok. Keen!

FIGURES THAT HAVE BEEN PRODUCED IN '98

- **Alpha Flight**—(Toy Biz)—*Wizard* #76
- **Azrael**—Batman: Knight Force Ninjas (Kenner)—*Wizard* #57, #58
- **Bantha**—Star Wars: Power of the Force (Kenner)—*Wizard* #76
- **Biggs Darklighter**—Star Wars: POTF (Kenner)—*Wizard* #74
- **Bizarro**—Superman Animated (Kenner)—*Wizard* #57, #58, #59
- **Black Panther**—Neo-Genesis Exclusive (Toy Biz)—*Wizard* #78, #85
- **Black Widow**—Neo-Genesis Exclusive (Toy Biz)—*Wizard* #82, #84
- **Blink**—Marvel's Most Wanted (Toy Biz)—*Wizard* #68, #70, #71, #72, #73, #74, #76
- **Cantina Aliens**—Star Wars: POTF (Kenner)—*Wizard* #83
- **Creature from the Black Lagoon**—(Hasbro)—*Wizard* #75
- **Daredevil**—Spider-Man: Web Wars (Toy Biz)—*Wizard* #61
- **Darth Vader w/ removable helmet**—Star Wars: POTF (Kenner) *Wizard* #66, #71, #72, #73, #74
- **Ewoks**—Star Wars: POTF (Kenner)—*Wizard* #76
- **Gen13**—(D-Boy)—*Wizard* #68, #70, #71, #72, #73
- **Grand Admiral Thrawn**—Star Wars Expanded Universe (Kenner)—*Wizard* #61
- **Jack O' Lantern**—Spider-Man: Bug Busters (Toy Biz) *Wizard* #63
- **Martian Manhunter**—JLA (Hasbro)—*Wizard* #70, #79, #82, #83
- **Mirror Mirror Kirk and Spock**—Star Trek (Playmates)—*Wizard* #62
- **Oola**—Star Wars: POTF (Kenner)—*Wizard* #78, #79, #80
- **Sandman**—Spider-Man Flip 'n Trap (Toy Biz)—*Wizard* #55, #56, #57
- **Spirit of Yoda**—Star Wars: POTF (Kenner)—*Wizard* #80, #82, #83, #84
- **Superman Red/Superman Blue**—JLA (Hasbro)—*Wizard* #73, #74, #82
- **Uncle Owen**—Star Wars: POTF (Kenner)—*Wizard* #66
- **Universal Monsters**—(Hasbro)—*Wizard* #63
- **Wampa**—Star Wars: POTF (Kenner)—*Wizard* #66, #71
- **Witchblade**—Witchblade (M.A.C.)—*Wizard* #61, #68
- **X-Man**—Marvel's Most Wanted (Toy Biz)—*Wizard* #61, #68, #70, #71, #72, #73, #74, #76
- **X-Men Boxed Set**—(Toy Biz)—*Wizard* #70, #71, #72 ,#73 ,#74

FIGURES ON THE WAY FOR '99

- **Avengers Boxed Set**—(Toy Biz)—*Wizard* #71
- **Buffy the Vampire Slayer**—(M.A.C.)—*Wizard* #75
- **Danger Girl**—(McFarlane Toys)—*Wizard* #85, #86
- **Darkchylde**—(M.A.C.)—*Wizard* #76
- **Dawn**—(McFarlane Toys)—*Wizard* #62
- **Falcon**—Neo-Genesis Exclusive (Toy Biz)—*Wizard* #72, #79
- **Fathom**—(McFarlane Toys)—*Wizard* #86
- **Havok**—*ToyFare* Exclusive (Toy Biz)—*Wizard* #55, #56, #57, #58
- **Iron Man**—Famous Covers (Toy Biz)—*Wizard* #80
- **Wonder Woman**—DC Comics—*Wizard* #72, #74, #76, #78, #79, #80

Hey! Keep sending in your requests! You've already made a difference! Drop us a note with your "dream figures" at:

TOY WISH LIST c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920
Or e-mail us at: WizardTGTC@aol.com

MARVEL VS. YOUR MOM

Once again, the worlds of video games and toys are colliding. Hot on the heels of the popular Street Fighter vs. X-Men, Toy Biz follows up with **Marvel vs. Capcom,** based on the popular arcade game which pits superheroes like **Spider-Man** and **Captain America** against video game stars like **Mega Man** (*Mega Man*) and **Morrigan** (*Darkstalkers*). Toy Biz's action figure line offers up cartoony versions of your favorite heroes in two-packs with Capcom characters, along with special action features that mimic the game play action. The first four two-packs include Captain America vs. Morrigan (shown above), Spider-Man vs. **Strider Hiyru**, **Venom** vs. **Captain Commando** (*Marvel vs. Capcom*) and **War Machine** vs. Mega Man.

LUNCH TIME Turok, the dinosaur hunter, stabs his way into the toy scene.

TUROK ROCKS DA HOUSE

Turok, star of comics and video games, finally gets the toy treatment from Playmates. In conjunction with the release of *Turok 2: Seeds of Evil*, the second Turok Nintendo 64 video game, Playmates unveiled a Turok action-figure line and special diorama. The diorama depicts Turok battling it out with a dinosaur, while the 5-inch figures are fully-articulated and include **Joshua Fireseed, Tal'Set, Campaigner, Primagen** and **Adon.** Look for these items in stores now.

MARVEL VS. CAPCOM PHOTO COURTESY OF TOY BIZ. TUROK PHOTO COURTESY OF PLAYMATES. DARTH VADER PHOTO © 1998 LUCASFILM. AVENGERS PHOTOS COURTESY OF TOY BIZ.

SOUND BITES THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"JOE [KELLY] AND I COULD HAVE MADE A MAJOR MARK ON THE X-MEN, BUT THE WAY THE WORK PROCESS WENT, THAT WAS NOT GOING TO HAPPEN."
—*Steven T. Seagle on he and Kelly leaving as X-scribes (Wizard #87, November 1998)*

AVENGERS GET COVERED

Toy Biz's Famous Covers are switching gears.

Taking a break from the typical two hero, one heroine and one villain format of previous Famous Covers assortments, Toy Biz decided to make four classic **Avengers** members for the next grouping. The line is called, strangely enough, Avengers Assemble. **Hawkeye**, **Vision**, **Iron Man** and the **Hulk** arrive as Mego-style 8-inch action figures with cloth costumes and super-posable bodies. All four figures will arrive in stores between December and January, in the usual Famous Covers gatefold packaging.

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE Toy Biz revisits the 8-inch Famous Covers line with four Avengers (Hawkeye, Vison, Iron Man and the Hulk) in December/January.

HAWKEYE

VISION

HULK

When justice is needed

Turn to the law of Gravity...

CAPTAIN GRAVITY™

Issue #1 of this exciting series is now available at a comics shop near you.

And be on the lookout for issues #2-4 of this four issue mini series due in stores the first week of January, February and March.

Can't find it...

Contact us at **pfpress@swbell.net** and we'll send you a list of stores carrying this fast-paced, action title.

And Remember...

No One Escapes the Law of Gravity!

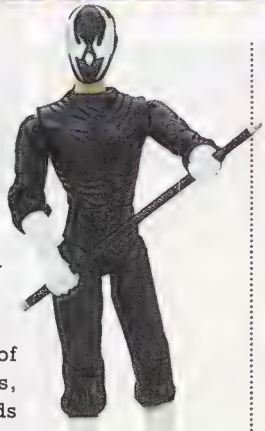
HALL OF FAME

THE TOP 10 ACTION FIGURES OF 1998

10) GRENDEL

(Big Blast—Graphitti Designs)

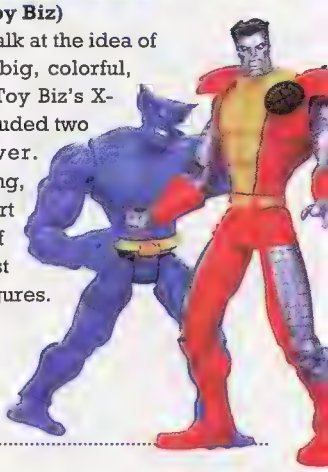
Who would have ever thought that Matt Wagner's Grendel would ever show up as an action figure? Well, thanks to Graphitti Designs, the unbelievable came true this year with one nifty action figure. Not only does this figure stand a big 8 inches tall, but it sports lots of articulation and accessories, including interchangeable hands and a battle staff.

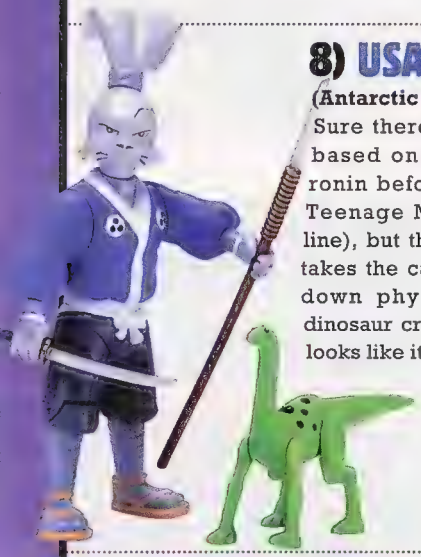


9) BEAST AND COLOSSUS

(X-Men: Super Shooters—Toy Biz)

Die-hard X-Men fans might balk at the idea of tough-as-nails mutants with big, colorful, transforming weapons, but Toy Biz's X-Men: Super Shooters line included two of the best X-Men toys ever. Aside from excellent sculpting, both Colossus and Beast sport 14 (Yeah, 14!!!) points of articulation, a number almost unheard of in 5-inch action figures.





8) USAGI YOJIMBO

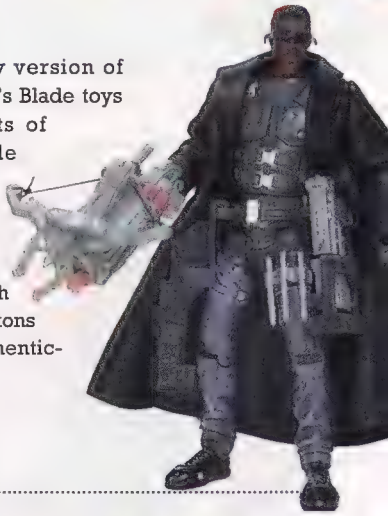
(Antarctic Toys)

Sure there've been other toys based on Stan Sakai's rabbit ronin before (from Playmates' Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles line), but this new version really takes the cake. With a slimmed-down physique and cute li'l dinosaur critter sidekick, this toy looks like it just popped off of one of Sakai's comics.

7) BLADE

(Blade—Toy Biz)

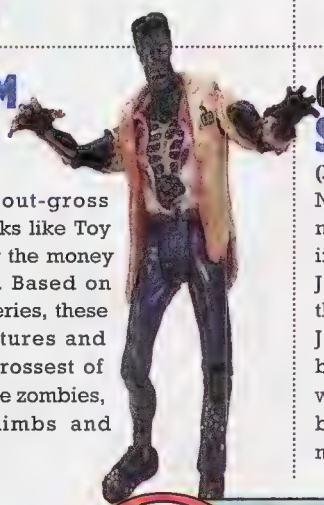
It's like owning a tiny version of Wesley Snipes. Toy Biz's Blade toys were the sleeper hits of the year. Most people expect movie toys to be lackluster, but this Blade toy featured a dead-on likeness of star Snipes, complete with removable sunglasses, tons of articulation and authentic-looking weapons.



6) ZOMBIE FROM RESIDENT EVIL

(Resident Evil—Toy Biz)

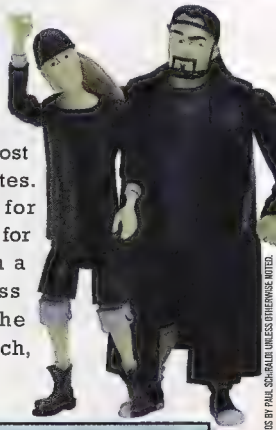
Boo! Could anyone ever out-gross McFarlane Toys? Well, it looks like Toy Biz gave McFarlane a run for the money with its Resident Evil toys. Based on the successful video game series, these toys featured gnarly creatures and exploding undead dogs. Grossest of the gross would have to be the zombies, which featured pull-off limbs and maggoty goodness.



6) JAY AND SILENT BOB

(Big Blast—Graphitti Designs)

Naga-noonch! No doubt about it, nothing beats toys of two of the most infamous, drug-addled reprobates. Jay and Bob gained notoriety for their outrageous accessories and for Jay's special voice chip. Push a button and hear such timeless witticisms as "I'm all about the brown," or "Snooch to the noonch, naga-noonch!" Pure genius!



ALL PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHRAUB UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

SOUND BITES

"I'M NOT SHY, SO I'LL TELL YOU: KISS FANS LOVE IT. COMIC FANS LOVE IT. IT'S GOOD."
—*Gene Simmons, KISS bassist, on the* KISS: The Psycho Circus *comic (Wizard #87, November 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

4) BATMAN AND ROBIN

(New Adventures of Batman—Kenner)

Good ol' Batman and Robin. The dynamic duo got a facelift on their WB! cartoon, so Kenner offered up all-new action figures of the pair's animated likenesses. These may not be the flashiest figures of the year, but they both look like they jumped right off of the TV screen and into your lap. And when it was reported in the summer that Robin was taken out of production, fan interest only became stronger.

3) BANTHA WITH TUSKEN RAIDER

(Star Wars: Power of the Force—Kenner)

Falling into the category of "I can't believe they never made this toy before," Kenner's Bantha toy became one of the big hits of the 1998 summer. Sportin' loads of thick fur, a removable saddle and a nifty Tusken Raider bonus figure, this toy recreates the legendary Bantha in all its woolly glory.

2) DR. FRANKENSTEIN PLAYSET

(McFarlane's Monsters—McFarlane Toys)

If you're looking for the most bang for your toy-buying dollar, you can't go wrong with any of the Todd McFarlane's Monsters playsets. Out of the four new sets released this year, the Dr. Frankenstein set gets our seal of approval. You've got the infamous Doc himself, his grisly creation...and not to mention a bunch of instruments and body parts. But the coolest part is that you can attach the whole set to last year's Frankenstein set to make one huge laboratory!

1) DARTH VADER WITH REMOVABLE HELMET

(Star Wars: POTF—Kenner)

The wait was finally over. This action figure has been on fans' wish lists since the dawn of time (or 1983 when "Return of the Jedi" came out). And Kenner finally delivered with our vote for best toy of the year. The removable helmet was the feature that enticed most buyers, but just in case that wasn't enough, this action figure sports an extra joint at the elbow for lightsaber-swinging action. And go one step further, Vader's hand even comes off to recreate his final confrontation with Luke Skywalker on the second Death Star. They don't come any cooler than this toy.

ToyFare *Assistant Editor (and polka king) Tom Palmer Jr. is highly articulate—oops, we mean* articulated.

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Other than the Man of Steel, The Eradicator is the only surviving legacy from the dead planet of Krypton. A sentient machine originally created to preserve the heritage of the doomed planet, the Eradicator eventually found its way to our world and took humanoid form with one goal in mind—to recreate Krypton by any means necessary!

FOR MORE COOL TOY OFFERS, CHECK OUT TOYFARE: THE TOY MAGAZINE MONTHLY FROM WIZARD ENTERTAINMENT!

KRYPTONIAN LAW

No reproductions of this coupon will be accepted. This coupon must be sent in the accompanying envelope. Remit by check or money order only. Canadian orders remit $13.00 per figure, other foreign orders remit $16.00 per figure. All payment must be in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank. Make all checks payable to Wizard Entertainment Group. Offer good only while supplies last. Please allow 12-to-16 weeks for delivery. Changes of address will not be forwarded unless Wizard Entertainment Group is notified in writing by April 28, 1999. ™ & ® 1998 Hasbro Inc. All Rights Reserved. DC Bullet Logo™, The Eradicator and all related characters, names and indicia are a trademark of DC Comics © 1998.

stuff

COMIC BOOK MERCHANDISE YOU CAN BUY...

By David Borak and the *Wizard* Staff

Who among us doesn't like stuff? Whether it's Blink's Eye Drops, Admiral Ackbar's It's a (Venus Fly) Trap! or Spider-Man's Grow Your Own Clone set, we're all suckers for comic-related merchandise. Each month, *Wizard* will strive to show you the latest and super-neatest in comic book statues, posters, pins, magnets, shirts and other goodies.

In short, if it's cool, and if it's stuff, you'll find it here.

CONSPIRACY CUTIES "Hey, Barbie! Let's go to the Malibu beach house and unearth some dead aliens!"

X-BARBIES

Mattel has bestowed the highest accolade of our time on the hit show and movie "The X-Files" with the new Ken and Barbie X-Files Set ($79.95). Ken and Barbie are dressed as FBI agents Mulder and Scully with authentic reproductions of the costumes from the feature film. Barbie features Scully's bobbed, red hair, and Ken has Mulder's signature sideburns. They even have authentic-looking badges and credentials! Look for them in stores now or buy it on-line though the Sci-Fi Channel Online Store at http://www.shopscifi.com/categories/x-files.asp.

REVOLTIN' RESIN Spawn's extra-crispy puss is prominently shown on his new bust. Eeew!

SPAWN GETS BUSTED

Todd McFarlane Productions delivers a life-like bust ($89.95) of Spawn featuring the grim visage of the dead superhero Spawn from last summer's live-action "Spawn" movie. This polystone/resin bust was cast (not sculpted) from the actual mask worn by Michael Jai White who played Spawn in the feature film. The fully-painted, 13.5" X 12" bust is displayed on a detailed, sculpted stand with a design of the Spawn logo. You'll find it in specialty stores everywhere in December.

SNOW BUSINESS Sara Pezzini, the Witchblade wearer, is stuck in a *faux* winter wonderland.

WITCHBLADE SNOWMAID

Moore Creations and Top Cow bring you the Witchblade Snow Globe ($139.50) in time for the holidays. Sculpted by Gabriel Marquez, this snow globe features Sara Pezzini, the Witchblade wearer, standing regally in a musical globe of swirling green mist that measures more than 10 inches high. The globe rests on a base of claws with a Witchblade name plate. You'll hear Debussy's *Claire d' Lune* when you turn the knob on the bottom. It's limited to 3,000 editions and will be found in stores in December.

SWAMPY STATUETTE

Swamp Thing needs to be watered! DC Comics and Vertigo bring you a smaller version of the beautiful Swamp Thing statue by William Paquet based on designs by Michael Zulli. The Swamp Thing Mini-Statue ($39.95) measures 5 3/4 inches tall, is made of cold-cast porcelain and is reproduced with the same detail as the original. It's limited to 2,400 pieces and will be in stores Jan. 20.

NON-(PULP)-FICTION Swamp Thing trades plant matter for porcelain with his new mini-statue.

SOUND BITES THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"I AM THE GIMMICK."
—*John Byrne on how Marvel will promote* Spider-Man: Chapter One *(Wizard #83, July 1998)*

AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL COMICS RETAILER

AN UN-'GOG'LY STATUE

Straight from the pages of *The Kingdom*, DC launches the first in a new line of mid-sized statues with the Gog Medium Statue ($79.95). The deadly villain measures 7.5 inches tall and is based on designs by artist Jerry Ordway. The cold-cast porcelain Gog statue is limited to 3,000 pieces and will be available in mid-December.

AGOG! Horn-headed hellion Gog menaces DC heroes–and gets great reception from his antlers.

WATCH OUT, MARVEL!

Artwatch International and Marvel Comics present a series of high-quality watches based on Marvel Characters. The Electro-Luminescent Sport Models ($39.99 each) have a light-up feature emphasizing a dynamic picture of Spider-Man (three different versions), Silver Surfer, Wolverine, Captain America, Hulk, Ghost Rider, Thing or Storm. You'll also find a series of pocket watches ($24.99-$29.99 each) with Spider-Man, Silver Surfer, Wolverine or Thing inside either a pewter or antique gold case and a leather fob. For purists, you'll also find some basic Marvel watches of Spidey, Cap, Wolvie, Storm and Silver Surfer with braided straps ($24.99-$29.99 each). Each watch comes packaged in a collectible-style matchbox with Marvel Comics artwork. These also come with Japanese quartz movement and a three-year limited warranty. Look for these new Marvel watches in department and comic book stores everywhere now.

MARVELOUS TIME At the sound of the beep, it will be exactly time to get these neat Marvel watches.

HOT STUFF!!!!!!!!

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

DEVILISH STATUES

Inspired by Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti's new take on Daredevil, Bowen Designs brings old Hornhead (Daredevil) back with two limited-edition sculptures ($150 each). Randy Bowen has sculpted a new 1:8 scale sculpture of Daredevil that measures more than 14 inches tall. They're available in a "year one" yellow costume (DD's original fighting togs!) that's limited to 2,000 units and a red version limited to 4,000 units. Both fully painted, cold-cast porcelain statues will be available in January.

BILLY CLUBBED Even Frank Miller would wanna get his hands on this cool DD statue (inset shows a "year one" costume variant).

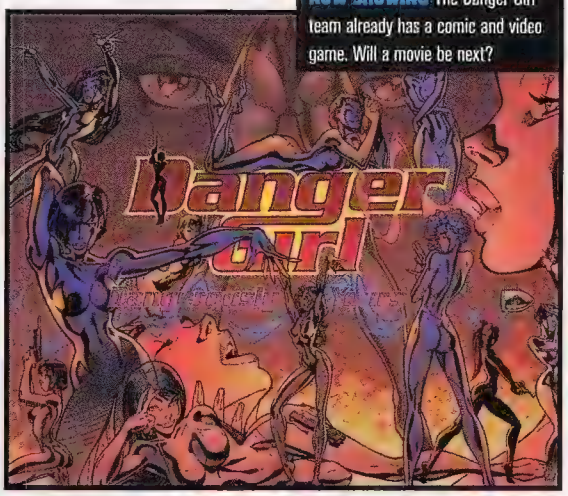
GONE POSTAL! Neither rain nor sleet can stop the Man of Steel lithograph.

SUPER-STAMP

DC Comics and the U.S. Postal Service commemorate the release of the first DC Comics' U.S. postage stamp with the "Stamping Out Injustice Since 1938" Collector's Lithograph ($125). This framed collector's piece includes a 9" X 14" stamp art lithograph, an official U.S. postage stamp featuring Superman which is hand-canceled on an original "First Day of Issue" envelope, and a Superman commemorative coin exclusive to this set. The collector's lithograph is limited to 1,250 editions; it's available in Warner Bros. Studio Stores everywhere, or at your local post office.

DANGEROUS LITHOGRAPH

WildStorm and Dynamic Forces Merchandise present the Danger Girl: "Movie Poster Spread" Lithograph ($19.95 unsigned, $39.95 signed by artist J. Scott Campbell). This image reprints the double-page spread from *Danger Girl* #1. The girls are featured in a layout reminiscent of the racy "James Bond" film opening credit sequences. The spread was enlarged into a 18" X 24" lithograph that will be available in December.



NOW SHOWING The Danger Girl team already has a comic and video game. Will a movie be next?

BEAM ME OPEN, SCOTTY

Tele-mania takes you where no garage-door opener has gone before with the Classic Star Trek Communicator Garage Door Opener ($49.95)! Yes, this replica of the communicator from the original "Star Trek" series has an extensive range that allows it to be used with most automatic garages. You'll hear Star Trek sound effects each time you open the communicator cover and when you use the buttons. It comes with a 9-volt battery and a clip for convenient visor and pocket use. This 4.5" X 2.5" communicator is available in specialty stores now.

CARPORT COMMUNICATOR A garage-door opener shaped like a Star Trek communicator is most illogical, but fun.

TRACKS OF JUSTICE

Kid Rhino and DC Comics bring justice to your stereo with *Total Justice: The Ultimate Weapon* ($11.98 CD, $7.98 cassette). The album blends a spoken-word comic book story with contemporary music styles such as rock, techno, hip-hop and fun (alas, there are no backwards messages compelling you to do evil deeds). The story revolves around the evil Darkseid's attempt to build the ultimate weapon and use it to destroy Earth—in doing so, he'll be pitted against a slew of DC heroes including Batman, Superman and Wonder Woman. And if you think Darkseid wins, we'll sell you a bridge. *Total Justice* is available now.

DARKSEID OF THE MOON Personally, we prefer the hard-rockin' sounds of Neil Diamond.

Check your local stores for availability of all these funky-fresh products. Or ask your friendly neighborhood comic store to special order 'em for ya!

YO! Are you a company who sells stuff cool enough to make the grade here? Let us be the judge of that. Send any info and/or samples to:

Stuff for Stuff
c/o Wizard Entertainment
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

SOUND BITES THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"WELL...THAT WAS A HUMBLING EXPERIENCE."
—*Batman after having his lungs handed to him by Prometheus (JLA #17, April 1998)*

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video STUFF

By Matthew Danish

Video killed the radio star, but who's complaining? Certainly not us. Welcome to "Video Stuff," a column where we let loose with news, previews, reviews and super-secret codes for the hottest, most spanktacular console and PC games around. And while you're greedily gearing up for the holiday season *Wizard* has been very busy compiling this extra-long list of ultra-cool games. It's going to be a merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah and joyous New Year indeed.

Fire up the controllers...it's video game time.

PLAYSTATION PEZZINI?

Sara Pezzini, meet your video game counterpart. Pezzini, the mystical gauntlet-wielding star of Top Cow's monthly title *Witchblade*, will appear in her own *Witchblade* video game scheduled for release in late 1999.

The game's format, storyline and even which systems it will be released on have yet to be determined, but gamers do have something to cheer about. Eidos Interactive and its Core Design group (*Tomb Raider I* and *II*) will produce the game.

"Projects this exciting don't come along very often, but when they do, you want to really make something special," Eidos Interactive's president, Keith Boesky, said. "With our Core Design group working on *Witchblade*, we think it truly will be."

DREAMCAST GETS MONSTROUS

Look out, Tokyo. Sega's first release for the new Dreamcast system will be an adaptation of the classic movie "Godzilla." In the game, called *Godzilla Generations*, players will take the misunderstood movie monster on a romp through what should be some of the most state-of-the-art video game cities ever. Early pictures show our glowering friend kicking the hell out of humanity with no compunction against backdrops of ultra-realistic cars, billboards and skyscrapers! While the Japanese release date is Christmas 1998, no word is yet available on this game's release for North America.

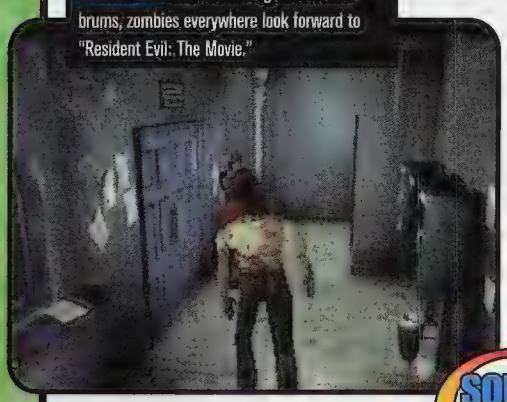
ROMERO DIRECTS 'RESIDENT EVIL'

Sometimes, evil is best.

George A. Romero, famed director of the classic horror film "Night of the Living Dead," is slated to write and direct "Resident Evil: The Movie."

The film, based on the zombie-filled Capcom video game of the same name, is a joint venture between Capcom and Constantine Films. The film's location, casting and release date have yet to be determined, but Romero is quoted as saying the film will be released about the same time as the video game *Resident Evil 3*.

"I'm hoping that it can just be dark and chilling like the game—good zombies, good makeup, good effects," Romero recently said. He added that even though the American version will have an "R" rating, he plans to shoot the film "balls out," and release it in some countries overseas or as a director's cut.■



BRAINIACS When not eating human cerebrums, zombies everywhere look forward to "Resident Evil: The Movie."

FIRST LOOK: SOUTH PARK

"YOU killed Kenny!" In Acclaim's *South Park* game for the N64, you become a "South Park" character who kills your fellow townsfolk. It's slated for a Christmas release.

UPAHEAD→

The fantasy is 'Final,'
Bandicoot's gone 'WARPED,'
Soldiers get 'Small' and more!

SOUND BITES THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"I WANT THE VILLAIN TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE DANGEROUS AND FORMIDABLE THAN THE HERO—OTHERWISE, WHAT'S THE POINT?"
—*Chris Claremont (Wizard #85, September 1998)*

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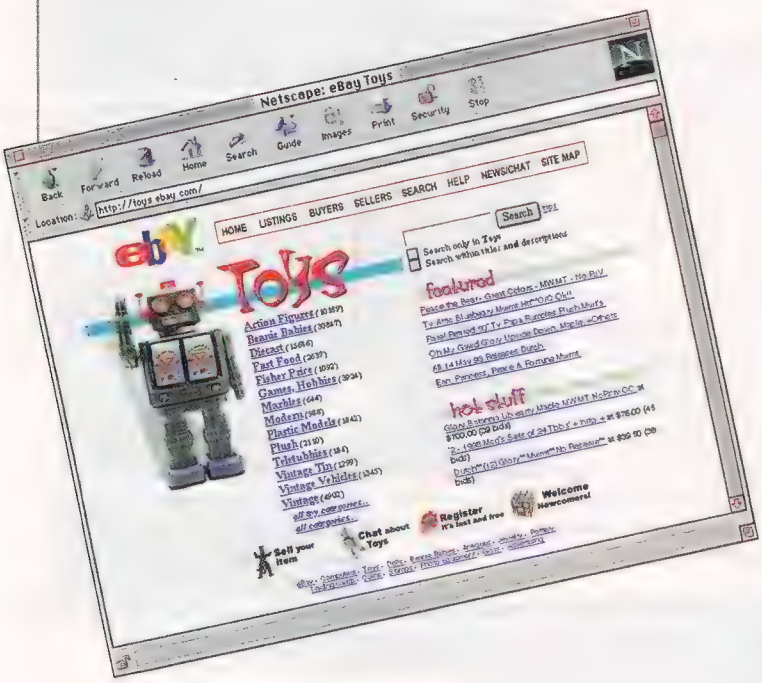

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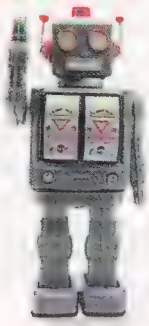

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TUROK 2: SEEDS OF EVIL

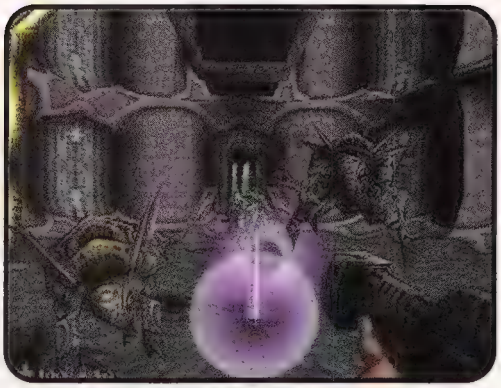
PUBLISHER: Acclaim
PLATFORM: Nintendo 64, PC
AVAILABILITY: November 1998

Turok fans, sharpen your arrows. Just when you thought it was safe to go back to the Lost Land, Acclaim brings *Turok 2: Seeds of Evil* to the Nintendo 64, populated with scores of dinosaurs ready to inflict pain and suffering on the sharp-shooting Son of Stone.

In the preview demo *Wizard* had the opportunity to test, *Turok 2* proved superior to its predecessor in both graphics and gameplay. The action is fast and furious, as Turok is surrounded by explosions while predatory dinosaurs of all shapes and sizes zoom around corners, lob grenades from overhead platforms, and even run away when wounded. Always ready for battle, Turok has a full artillery to use in retaliation, including the Shredder, a powerful weapon that sends a spray of ricocheting lasers at hapless opponents.

The levels tested featured top-notch design, with great attention to detail and a high level of interactivity. To achieve mission goals, Turok must jump back and forth between levels rather than progress in a linear fashion, an improvement that's sure to bind gamers to their N64 for hours at a time. With the promise of six full worlds to explore and a four-player deathmatch mode, the final release of *Turok 2* should find its mark with game players everywhere this winter. ■ **Dan DiGiacomo**

TRY IT... If you like *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter, Quake,* or *Duke Nukem,* you'll really love *Turok 2: Seeds of Evil.*



TUROCKY ROAD Decisions, decisions. Should Turok use his big gun (above) or his oversized flame-thrower to kill 'em all? Hm...

FINAL FANTASY VIII

PUBLISHER: Square Soft
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
AVAILABILITY: First quarter 1999; price to be determined

The wait is almost over, role-playing game fans! At long last, Square Soft has released an unfinished demo of *Final Fantasy VIII,* the sequel to one of the most popular PlayStation games ever.

While the game mechanics remain similar to those of its predecessor, gone are the spiky-haired, cartoony characters that captured the hearts and imaginations of gamers worldwide. The protagonist of *Final Fantasy VIII* is Squall Leonheart, a scar-faced, no-nonsense swordsman who leads a three-character squad into this hours-long adventure that's once again framed by lavish cut scenes.

As in *Final Fantasy VII,* gamers roam detailed, pre-rendered cities and locales, this time with all party members visible rather than the appointed leader representing the group. The demo was not expansive enough to view the world map, though the complex storyline encompasses the scope of a world war and Squall's role in it.

A host of tough new enemies spring into battle against Squall and company; gamers will be surprised to face boss characters Lt. Biggs and his sidekick Wedge (paying homage, to the fighter pilots from "Star Wars") early on. The party retaliates in turn-based combat with spells, weapons and the new Guardian Force option that summons massive, well-animated creatures—such as a huge dragon which initiates a tremendous tsunami. ■ **Dan DiGiacomo**

TRY IT... If you like any of the *Final Fantasy* series, you're probably already on line to buy *Final Fantasy VIII.* So we won't bother...

EIGHT AIN'T ENOUGH Brave-hearted hero Squall Leonhart leads his team through streets paved with danger–and beyond.

MORE →

"I'M THE CABOOSE ON THE WILL SMITH TRAIN."
—*Rob Liefeld on his partnership in "The Mark," a planned feature film and comic (Wizard #85, September 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

If knowledge is power,
must innocence be punished?

Gifts of the Night

A boy prince's visions give wings to schemes and hatreds that could destroy a kingdom.

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CRASH BANDICOOT: WARPED

MANUFACTURER: Sony Computer Entertainment
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $39.99, available now

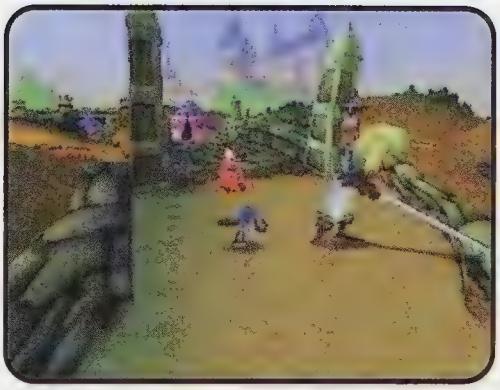
Forget "third time's the charm." The charm in *Crash Bandicoot: WARPED* comes from its goofy, rat-like marsupial protagonist, and from every nook and cranny of the game's 35-plus levels.

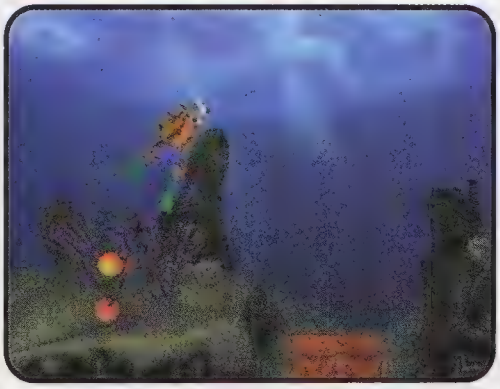
It's indeed fitting that neither time nor tide has managed to put a dent in Crash's ridiculously oversized smile. His third video game effort is his most robust; this time he's plagued by the evil mask Uka Uka and made to travel through time and space to collect various crystals, gems and relics. Although the game's third-person action/adventure formula is tried and true, *WARPED* outdoes most of its competition with extremely varied levels and a frenetic sense of humor.

Each level opens up into a different world, and offers up different gameplay opportunities. In the "Bone Yard," Crash is forced to race for his life as he's chased by a huge, rampaging triceratops—an oddly comic tip of the hat to the boulder scene in "Raiders of the Lost Ark." Enter the "Orient Express" level and players can control Crash's cute sister Coco as she rides a tiger on the Great Wall of China. Crash dons scuba gear and battles sharks in an undersea level and races through another level on a motorcycle.

TRY IT... If you like *Tomba*, *Crash Bandicoot* or *Crash II*, spin like a dervish to get *Crash Bandicoot: WARPED*.

There's a lot to like here—and laugh at. Crash will turn into a prince when he's kissed by a frog. When he's cut in two by a swordsman, his upper half will stare incredulously while his lower body walks away. Throw in a bunch of new moves, countless secret areas and bonus levels and the resultant juggernaut should crush all—with a huge smile on its tremendous face. ■ **Greg Orlando**





OLD COOT On land or under the seas, Crash Bandicoot tears through life with an oversized smile.

STAR TREK: STARSHIP CREATOR

MANUFACTURER: Simon & Schuster Interactive
PLATFORM: Macintosh/PC
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $29.95; available now

Let's face it: Capt. Picard is a grade-A wimp. Why, even lowly you could choose a better captain than this putz.

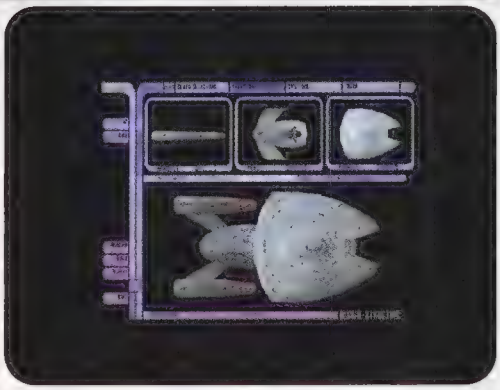
You can. *Starship Creator* gives players the power of a Starfleet admiral, with the ability to create a starship, stock it full of technical doo-dads, select a sturdy crew to man the ship, and then send it out into space to boldly go where no man has gone before.

Creator's depth and scope (even in the preview copy tested) is nothing short of astounding. All the characters, ships and equipment come straight from the various Star Trek series and movies. Players can select one of seven ship designs (including the original Enterprise, Voyager, etc.), fill seven command slots from captain to ship's counselor, and select from roughly 100 candidates. Ultimately, the choices will affect how the ship is handled on its missions. A free spirit such as Capt. Kirk is likely to disobey orders from time to time, whereas a bootlicker such as Lt. Worf is apt to accept an order to fly directly into a planet's sun.

TRY IT... If you own a pair of pointed, rubber Vulcan ears or enjoy such strategical simulations as *Civilization* or *Castles II*, you'll like *Star Trek: Starship Creator*.

The pool bottoms out, though, in gameplay. Here, players select the mission and sit back as the computer does the work. Some of these tasks can be completed without the user even being in the same room as the game. Other voyages require the user to give minimal input in the way of instructions—it might be an accurate representation of a Starfleet admiral's job, but where's the adventure (or fun) in that?

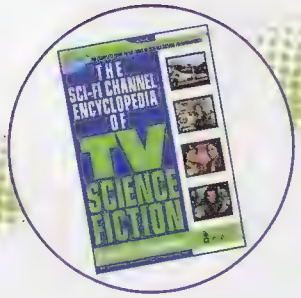
■ **Lt. (j.g.) Greg Orlando**



TREKKIN' *Starship Creator* lets players modify a Starship (above) and choose characters such as wimpy Dr. Bashir to serve as crew members (below).

SOUND BITES THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"I THOUGHT MORE PEOPLE WERE GOING TO COME RUNNING OUT TO PISS ON MY GRAVE."
—*Hart Fisher, Boneyard Press publisher, on his faked death (Wizard #87, November 1998)*



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SMALL SOLDIERS

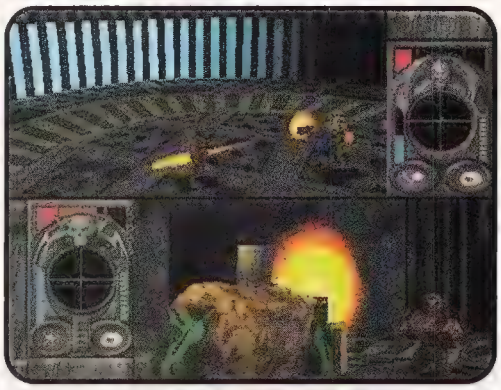
MANUFACTURER: Electronic Arts/DreamWorks Interactive
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $39.99, available now

Get small, baby, and enter the mythical realm of the Gorgonites. *Small Soldiers* is an intense, third-person shoot and walk through game in which players assume the role of Archer, the noble Gorgonite, on his travels through 14 incredible 3-D worlds. Vanquishing bad toy soldier Major Hazard and freeing your blue comrades (who actually join the fight) make this video game more fun than the movie that inspired it.

While the game does feature a two-player competitive combat mode, the heart is in leading Archer through his violent worlds. While the square button shoots and the X gives a huge jump, players can also use L1 and R1 to move sideways while firing. Unique evil robots and monsters lurk throughout the caverns and killing them turns them into cool pick-me-ups, which can add to the life meter or jazz your gun into one of 13 weapons. Super-sized weapons include homing missiles, mines and explosive grenades.

TRY IT... If you like *Tomb Raider*, the movie "Small Soldiers" or *Spyro the Dragon*, storm the local video game store and declare open hostilities until they sell you *Small Soldiers*.

The gameplay is very fluid and dynamic with a nice mix of violence and cartoon-like fantasy, while the weapon's handling is simple enough to be mastered on the first or second walk through. The game's scenery is also very cool and interactive, containing hidden power-ups and interactive obstacles such as geysers of blue water shooting from the floor which can act as catapults propelling the green protagonist up onto ledges, which contain more caverns of hidden world. ■



MINUSCULE MEN It's not the size of the soldier that matters–and if you believe that, we'll sell you some Florida swampland.

THE FIFTH ELEMENT

MANUFACTURER: Activision
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $39.95, available now

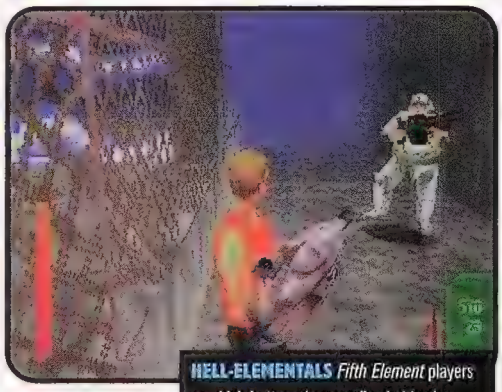
Based on the hit motion picture, *The Fifth Element* is a third-person action/adventure game where players take on the dual roles of Korben, an ex-soldier turned cab driver, and Leeloo, a beautiful extraterrestrial female.

The setting is 23rd century New York City, where players must fight, shoot and use all of their puzzle-solving skills to complete 16 levels before uniting the four ancient elements with the fifth element, anti-energy, to achieve an alchemical synthesis of being (whatever that means). While Korben is more of a shooter, Leeloo relies on martial-arts techniques to complete the two sub-missions which make up each level. Smart villains armed with handguns stalk the corridors.

The Fifth Element disc previewed by *Wizard* was not as finished as some of this month's other games, but it did offer a nice science-fiction feel and a complex, involving story, supported by movie-quality intermission screens cut from the actual film.

TRY IT... Like *Die Hard Trilogy*, *Nightmare Creatures* or "The Fifth Element"? Then you'll love Leeloo and Korben's thrill-a-minute *The Fifth Element*.

As Korben, players stalk the city's corridors, rolling, ducking and firing rounds from a handgun whose feel is similar to that of the weapons in *Resident Evil 2*. There are beams and walkways and stairwells to be traversed, in between picking off bad guys from covered positions. And Leeloo? She comes with her own set of butt-kicking martial-arts maneuvers to throw her enemies into disarray—and wears a revealing outfit that looks like white hospital tape draped around her naughty bits. ■



HELL-ELEMENTALS *Fifth Element* players can kick butt as the scantily clad Leeloo (above) or the gun-toting Korben (below).

SOUND BITES — THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"I GET A CALL A MONTH FROM PEOPLE ASKING ME ABOUT THE STEVEN SEAGAL FAN CLUB."
—*Steven T. Seagle, Uncanny X-Men writer, on his filmmaking namesake (Wizard #85, September 1998)*

NEW EXCLUSIVES FROM THE TOP STUDIOS!

MICHAEL TURNER BIKINI EXCLUSIVE LIMITED EDITION!

Top Cow's Witchblade teams with video game sensation Lara Croft one more time, for the biggest crossover of 1998!

New Bikini Exclusive Cover - $10.00 / Extremely Rare GOLD Edition - $30.00
Babbage Variant, scarce! - $10.00 / Sparkle, Silvestri 1:50 Variant - $50.00
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Witchblade #24 Rare Randy Green Alternate - $10.00

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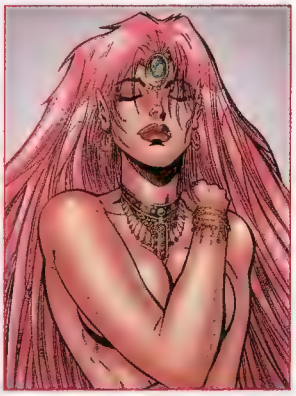

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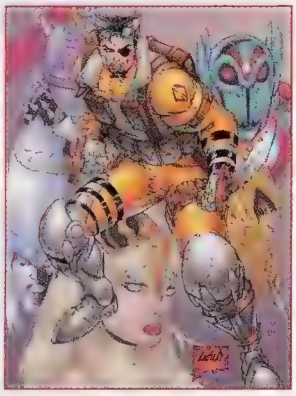

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BUSHIDO BLADE 2

MANUFACTURER: Square Soft
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $39.95; available now

Ah, the sweet sound of swordplay in the morning. *Bushido Blade 2* is organized around a simple story—the feud between two rival Samurai sects. As an assassin from the Sue Shainto clan, a player must move through village and city backgrounds, penetrate the stronghold of the rival clan and recapture a sacred sword called Yugiri.

The game features six different modes, but it all adds up to the same thing—kill or be killed. Players get to choose their own weapons from a nice, deadly assortment (some selectable weapons include broadswords, shortswords, thin fencing swords and even an iron fan). Once battle begins, players can, quite realistically, waste their opponents with a single, well-placed hit; most fights, however, require the user to stretch his skills to successfully attack, defend and counterattack against his foe.

While the plot and many modes offered in this game give it personality, the most fun aspect of *Bushido Blade 2* is the realistic combat swordfighting. After selecting a first- or third-person point of view, the sword battles commence against a nifty set of medieval day and night backgrounds. The circle button allows a swift vertical sword cut, while the X button cuts horizontally—by choosing the placement of their weapons, players can execute a large variety of different stabs, thrusts and parries. All fighters can charge at their opponents by holding L1 and steering the direction key; in addition, players can move freely in three dimensions. The ringing clang of locked swords and the dull thud when a sword slides into an opposing fighter's stomach give the battles a fun, realistic feel. ■

TRY IT... If you like *Busihdo Blade, Tobal* or *Star Gladiators*, you'll love *Bushido Blade 2*.

GINSU GIRLS They slice, they dice! Heck, they can even cut through a tin can and *still* have time to chop your fool head off.

CHEATSHEET

SPECIAL MOVES & SECRET CODES

MORE KOMBAT KODES

Has ripping your opponents' heads off lost its flavor? Try these super-secret codes to add a little zing to your Nintendo 64's *Mortal Kombat 4*. To use these codes, enter the "Vs." screen (where two fighters are seen grimacing at each other before battle) and use the A, Left-C and Right-C buttons *on two controllers* to access these numeric codes:

One-hit wins the fight: 123 123
Weapons are drawn at start of fight: 444 444
No throwing allowed: 100 100
Big head mode: 321 321
Silent Kombat: 666 666
Explosive Kombat: 050 050
Permanent weapons: 002 002
Noob Saibot mode: 012 012
Play on rain stage: 055 055
Play on ice pit: 313 313

webline

IT CAME FROM THE WORLD WIDE WEB

www.Tombraider.com

Hail to the queen, baby. Lara Croft's official Web site contains news on the "Tomb Raider" movie and lots of neat stuff including calendars and wallpaper. There's plenty more where that came from, too.

www.activision.com

The Web site of Activision, maker of such games as *The Fifth Element*.

www.universalstudios.com/smallsoldiers

Small Soldiers: a behind the scenes look from Universal Studios.

www.nintendojo.com

An unofficial but very well put together Nintendo 64 Web site, including previews, reviews and stories on the history of the Nintendo 64 system.

www.3rdm.net/pie-face/index.html

Pie is usually for eating, but it's also good for tossing in someone's face. Now you can toss pies at people via e-mail. Seriously. ■

SOUND BITES

"IF WE CAN ACHIEVE JUST A FRACTION OF THE SUCCESS SEEN IN JAPAN, POKEMON WILL BE MUCH BIGGER [IN THE UNITED STATES] THAN THE POWER RANGERS."
—*Norman Grossfeld, president of 4Kids, on a potential craze (Wizard #88, December 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

The ocean depths hold many mysteries...

Aspen Matthews is one.

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM™

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HOMEMADE HEROES

THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES

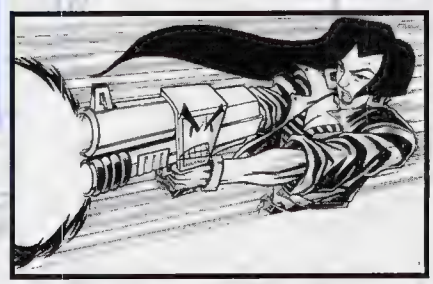
Hey, quit yer whinin' ya babies. They don't make figures of your favorite characters? You think you could make better ones than already exist? Either way, it's time to put up or shut up. The figures you see here were crafted by ordinary readers just like you. Starting with simple store-bought action figures, these go-getters combined a little imagination with some stuff from around the house. They will now be judged by the highest authority...us!

GRAND-PRIZE WINNER

MAGGOTT

Ken Watkins of Pinckney, Mich.

Toy Biz's Hulk Smart Hulk figure am what this X-Men member Maggott are made of. Oh wait, smart Hulk...so um: Eany and Meany, Maggott's two slug sidekicks (hidden in his hands) were created from Super Sculpey, and the armor and jacket from Milliput Putty. Ah, intelligent speak is better.



WHAT WE GAVE AWAY!

The grand-prize winner walks away with original pin-up art from Dreamsmith Studios' *Tranquility*, and the complete set of *Dreamsmith Studios Book* #1-#4 by Ben Capozzi.

Many thanks to Dreamsmith Studios for these nifty prizes.

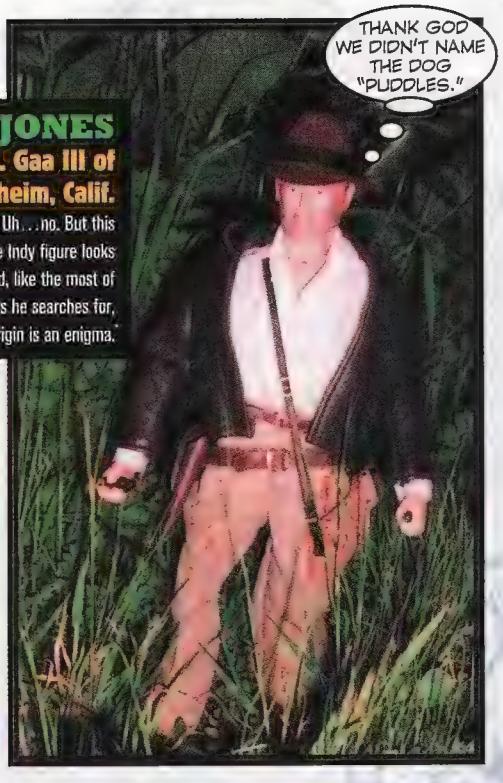
"COME UP WITH A REALLY GOOD IDEA AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE BEARDS ON SUPERHEROES AND HUGE COSTUME CHANGES ANYMORE, JUST TELL A GOOD STORY."
—*John Romita Jr., Spider-Man artist (Wizard #77, January 1998)*

HONORABLE MENTIONS

AGE OF APOCALYPSE SUNFIRE

Stewart Lee Hickman Jr. of Universal City, Texas

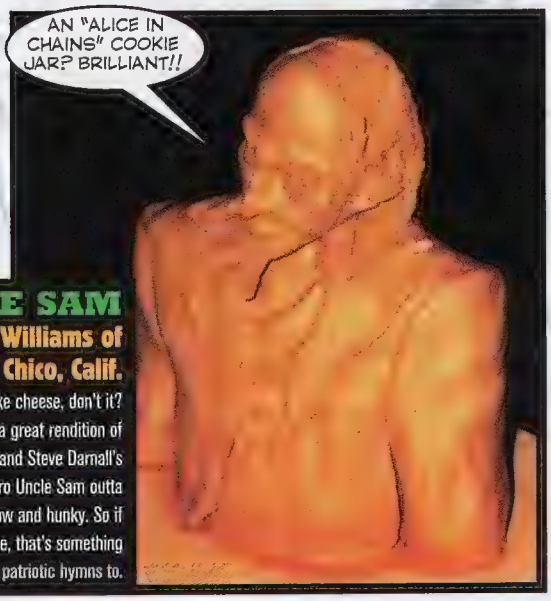
Ssssmokin'! The burning sensation that is the X-Men's Age of Apocalypse Sunfire is born from the repainting of a McFarlane Toys Redeemer action figure–with some Super Sculpey throw in.



INDIANA JONES

Albert B. Gaa III of Anaheim, Calif.

Is that Harrison Ford? Uh. . .no. But this custom-made Indy figure looks pretty sweet. And, like the most of the artifacts he searches for, this custom figure's origin is an enigma.



UNCLE SAM

Monte Williams of Chico, Calif.

It looks like cheese, don't it? Monte carved a great rendition of Alex Ross and Steve Darnall's patriotic hero Uncle Sam outta something yellow and hunky. So if it really is cheese, that's something to sing our patriotic hymns to.

HELLSTROM

Richard Radcliffe of Manassas, Va.

Daimon Hellstrom burns into existence through a Toy Biz Quicksilver head melded onto a Toy Biz Spider-Man 2099 body.

Do you want in on the fun? To enter the homemade figure contest, send at least TWO well-lit, clear, color photographs (**No Polaroids, and put 'em in cool or funny poses!**), along with your name, address, a DETAILED DESCRIPTION of how you created your figure, your full phone number (including area code) and even e-mail address to:

SUBMIT!

Homemade Heroes
c/o Wizard Entertainment
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

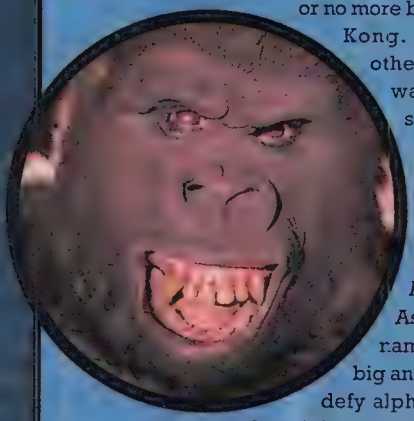
TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS

MONKEYS MONKEYS

HI, I'M B.J. McKAY, LAME STAR OF THE 1970s TV SHOW "B.J. AND THE BEAR"! I PLAYED A TRUCK DRIVER WITH A MONKEY SIDEKICK NAMED "BEAR." SO WHO BETTER THAN ME TO INTRODUCE THIS MONTH'S...TOP 10 *MONKEY* HEROES & VILLAINS!

1 KING KONG

That's King Kong, baby, and go heavy on the "King"! When you're talkin' giant monkeys—and we *are* talkin' giant monkeys here this month—they don't get no bigger, no badder or no more banana-filled than King Kong. Kong can whip any other monkey's ass nine ways till Tuesday and still bat biplanes away from the Empire State Building without breakin' a simian sweat! In fact, if you look in the *Yellow Pages* under "Monkey Ass-Whuppin'," Kong's name comes *first*! He's so big and so bad, he can even defy alphabetical order! He's the original. He's the biggest. And after all these years, he's still the best. That's King Kong, baby. Go heavy on that "King."

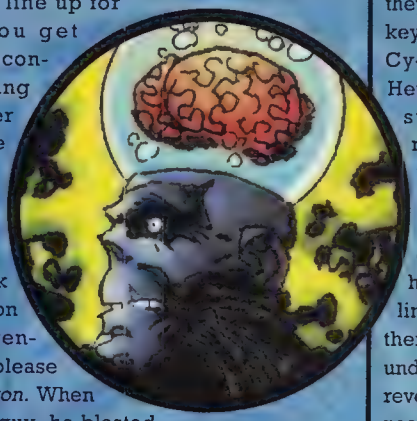


2 GORILLA GRODD

Hey! Gorilla Grodd, a longtime DC villain (How can a monkey be a villain? Are there really any bad monkeys? Or are they all just misunderstood primates?), has himself a pretty cool job: He's the ruler of Gorilla City! Just think about it! He gets to be King Lord Big-High Mucky-Muck of an entire city of monkeys! That's cool! So why does he still try to kick the Flash's ass? Or Supergirl's? Hey, if you were to give us a city full of primates to lord over, we'd be having so much fun, we'd swear off that "America's Funniest Home Videos" show forever! No kiddin'!

3 BRAINIAPE

Take Adolf Hitler's brain and mount it on a giant, homicidal gorilla and what do you get? No, not the only date a *Wizard* staffer can line up for Friday night. You get BrainiApe! What a concept! There's nothing more evil than Hitler and nothing more funny than monkeys, so by melding the two, one is left with the perfect combination for comic book mayhem. For more on the continuing adventures of BrainiApe, please refer to *Savage Dragon*. When last we saw the big guy, he blasted Dragon and the armor belonging to the villainous Overlord off the top of a building. Bad monkey!



4 CY-GOR

He's part cybernetic, part gorilla. And since "Gor-Netic" would be the worst name this side of "The Phantom Menace," they called him Cy-Gor! That Todd McFarlane has a monkey fetish, so he decided to feed his need by slappin' ol' Cy-Gor in the pages of *Spawn*. Hey—do ya think Cy-Gor's sudden appearance might have had anything to do with the fact that the Toddler needed more characters to put in his "Spawn" toy line? Nah. After all, there's no menace an undead, alley-dwelling, revenge-driven Hellspawn needs more than a giant monkey, right? Right?

SOUND BITES

"WHAT FRIGHTENS ME IS WHAT PEOPLE CAN DO TO EACH OTHER WITHOUT THE HELP OF GOBLINS AND SUCH."

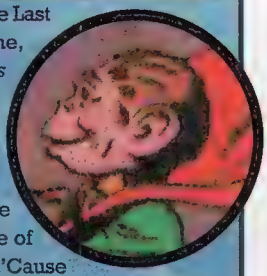
—*Warren Ellis on writing* Hellblazer *(Wizard #83, July 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

5 MONKEYMAN

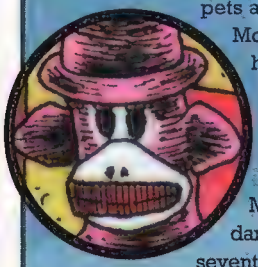
Hey, lookee here—a monkey with glasses! Now ain't that cute? Ah, what the hell. Sly Stallone slaps on a pair of specs every time he goes on a talk show and wants to look smart. So why can't an ape? Actually, Arthur Adams' Monkeyman, who appears in *Monkeyman & O'Brien* and more crossovers than any primate we've ever seen, *is* smart. He's a scientific genius from another dimension. And ever since he made a landing on Earth, he's been hangin' around with that saucy redhead, Ann O'Brien. *Real* smart! Not bad for a chimp.

6 BEPPO, THE SUPER-CHIMP



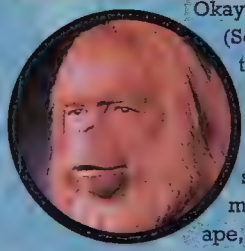
Sure, Superman is *supposed* to be the Last Son of Krypton. But once upon a time, before DC's *Crisis on Infinite Earths* came along to wipe away all sort of hideous memories, there was an unseen super-highway that brought stuff from doomed Krypton to Earth. Hither came Beppo, small of stature, but large of heart and prehensile of tail. Why? 'Cause *Superman* sold, monkeys always sell, and someone at DC figured there needed to be a super-chimp. That's all you really need to know.

7 SOCK MONKEY



Sock Monkey, gentle reader, has four things going for him. One: Monkeys are the coolest thing on Earth. Two: Sock puppets are the second coolest. Three: Sock Monkey and his stuffed pal Mr. Crow have wacky adventures where they burn down houses and take shrunken heads to Borneo and stuff. Four: The creator of the Dark Horse-published *Sock Monkey* is named "Tony Millionaire." And this is America, hot dammit! A sock puppet *can* ascend to the seventh-best monkey around!

8 DR. ZAIUS



Okay, we've been through BrainiApes (See: BrainiApe) and we've been through brainy apes (See: Monkeyman). But pound for pound and banana for banana, there ain't no monkey smarter than Dr. Zaius, star of the many "Planet of the Apes" movies! Yep. Zaius was one wise ol' ape, and was always able to tell them other monkeys what was goin' down. And he was even the subject of that great "Rock Me, Dr. Zaius" song from that episode of "The Simpsons." Double bonus!

9 MANDRILL

So the Mandrill, an old-timey Marvel bad guy who got his chimp ass handed to him by Daredevil about 100 times, has a really neat superpower. He has the ability to play on the emotions of humans and bring out their worst fears by emitting a certain odor. So in a nutshell, he makes people scared 'cause he stinks to high heaven. And he's got a big, brightly colored nose. Now that either makes him one durned pretty powerful monkey, or perhaps one of the Kennedys.

10 DOUG MAHNKE

Do not adjust your set! Monkey No. 10 is *Superman: The Man of Steel* penciler Doug Mahnke! And Doug pronounces his last name, well... just like you'd expect. But in addition to being a talented artist, Doug is also a raging ass-kicker!

He's from the north woods of Minnesota where everyone's a lumberjack or a pro 'rassler or something savage. So he could whoop any chimp on this list, especially if he drew the battle. After all, Doug is *real*. And he has the power of the pencil at his command.

MORT OF THE MONTH

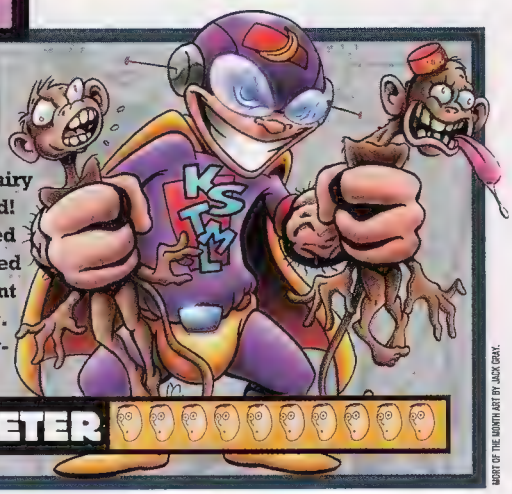
ONE LAME-ASS CHARACTER

KEEP-SQUEEZIN'-THEM-MONKEYS LAD

When gorillas go gonzo, who protects us? When apes attack, who stands up for humanity? Only one man is brave enough to face the hairy menace: The simian asphyxiator, Keep-Squeezin'-Them-Monkeys Lad!

Okay, here's the truth: *Wizard* once ran a wacky "Top 10 Rejected Legion of Super-Heroes Members" list. One crazy name we cooked up was "Keep-Squeezin'-Them-Monkeys Lad." And the crowd went wild. We started getting mail on this non-existent character. Everyone seemed to love him. But no one ever *saw* him. So we figured the time was right to draw him up and roll him out. Enjoy.

And give us a call if you need to. K-S-T-M-L is available for weddings, birthday parties and zoo escapes.



MORTOMETER

BJ & THE BEAR © NBC-TV/SAM HILL. KING KONG © 1976 THOMAUMONT PICTURES. PLANET OF THE APES © 20TH CENTURY FOX/APJAC PRODUCTIONS. DOUG MAHNKE PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIBALDI.

MORT OF THE MONTH ART BY JACK GRAY.

PICKS

THE MUST-READ COMICS SHIPPING IN DECEMBER

book of the month

JONAH HEX: SHADOW'S WEST #1 (OF 3)

VERTIGO/DC COMICS Ain't much left of the ol' West anymore: Just a buncha ghost towns and some nasty ol' coots. Seems Jonah Hex, the fastest gunslinger ever, joins a travelin' Wild West show. But it's filled with mysticism, a dwarf quick-shot artist and a bizarre baby that Hex has to get out of the show. Read it here, pardner, 'cuz Clint Eastwood never hadda put up with none o' *these* creepy critters. It's a yarn guaranteed ta chap yer hide, from nervous desperadoes Joe R. Lansdale, Timothy Truman and Sam Glanzman. **MR $2.95**

AKIKO #31

SIRIUS Holy Goosh! It's the conclusion to the six-part "Bornstone's Elixir"! Fifth-grade adventurer Akiko and her pals have the miracle elixir that'll cure the dying Professor Lunderdorf. Now the race is on to get it to him in time! But it looks like those lovin' feelings between 'Kiko and Prince Froptoppit might be dyin' out! Thrills! Tension! Danger! Romance! Pudding pops! By the ever-lovin' Mark Crilley. **$2.50**

AQUAMAN #52

DC COMICS It's two, two, two stories in one! Flashback with us to the days of the original *Aquaman* #1 from 1962 and see a new take on Aquaman's battle with the Fire Trolls! Then, go directly to the present where the Lava Lord attacks, leading an army of...those wacky Fire Trolls! They never stop! Written by Erik Larsen with "Flashback" art by Jim Aparo and Bill Sienkiewicz, and "current" stuff by Eric Battle and Ray McCarthy. **$1.99**

AVENGERS BOOKS

MARVEL Call in the rookies! With Captain America missing and Iron Man laid up in the hospital (see the write-up for *Iron Man* #13), the Avengers need the teen-age New Warriors to save the day in *Avengers* #13! By Kurt Busiek, George Pérez and Al Vey. Meanwhile, down the time stream in *Avengers Forever* #3, the Avengers choose a side in the cross-time Kang/Immortus war! By that Busiek fella, Carlos Pacheco and Jesus Merino. **$1.99—*Avengers* ; $2.99—*Forever***

BATTLE CHASERS #7

CLIFFHANGER/IMAGE Who said readin' funnybooks would never get ya anywheres? Surely not Humberto Grando of Elizabeth, N.J.! A monster *he* created plagues the Battle Chasers—Knolan, Gully, Calibretto and Garrison—in this very ish. (Seems Humberto won our "Create a Monster" contest from *Wizard* #81! How about that?!) By Joe Madureira, Munier Sharrieff and Tom McWeeney. **$2.50**

MR TITLES DENOTED WITH AN MR CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT'S SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

SOUND BITES

"I'M PREGNANT."
—*The Spoiler to Robin after their first date.* (Robin #57)

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

BOX OFFICE POISON #12

ANTARCTIC Bombshells burst left and right as Dorothy—girlfriend to Sherman, our perpetually frustrated main character—drops a shocking revelation on the whole *BOP* crew. Meanwhile, mellowed-out college teacher Stephen reveals a nugget from *his* past that will rock the *BOP*verse! *BOP*verse? Sounds like a real bad dance club with a high cover charge. By Alex Robinson. **MR $2.50**

DANGER GIRL #6

CLIFFHANGER/IMAGE Danger Girl Abbey Chase has a secret. And since chicks can never keep their yaps shut, she spills the beans to her equally curvy Team Danger Girl partners. But in this case, it's good to share. Abbey's got the scoop on how to defeat the team's double-secret and mondo-mysterious mega-menace. Rumor and innuendo are served up by J. Scott Campbell, Andy Hartnell and Alex Garner. **$2.50**

DAREDEVIL #4

MARVEL It's old home week as Matt Murdock (that's ol' hornhead himself) is paid a visit by Doctor Strange, Marvel's master of the mystic arts. And Bullseye—perhaps DD's greatest foe—also shows up. And that ain't all. Artist Joe Quesada reveals that longtime DD girlfriend Karen Page, "is back to her old tricks—no pun intended—as she adds another layer to what may become Matt's nervous breakdown." Then there's that baby Matt's protecting. She may be the Antichrist or she may be the Savior. What's up with her? "Matt tries to get rid of the baby," Quesada promises, "...the hard way!" Sound complex? It is. By Kevin Smith, Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti. **$2.50**

newreleases

FIRST TIME OUT

ARIA #1 **(Avalon/Image)** Mythological gods are alive and they hang out at a Manhattan bookstore. Hey, this ain't your everyday Barnes and Noble. **$2.50**

ASH: FIRE AND CROSSFIRE #1 **(Event)** Firefighter-by-day and super-hero-by-night Ashley Quinn contemplates his future as his mother's thrown into a coma. **$2.95**

COVEN (VOL. 2) #1 **(Awesome)** Eee-yowch! One original member of the Coven will die in this new #1! Guaranteed! **$2.50**

CROW #0 **(Kitchen Sink Press)** The original Crow–Eric Draven–is back in this 48-pager by *Crow* creator James O'Barr. **$3.50**

DOCTOR STRANGE #1 **(Marvel)** The Good Doctor uses his mystical abilities to solve a series of murders. **$2.99**

FANTASTIC FOUR & FANTASTIC FOUR '98 **(Marvel)** When the ever-lovin' blue-eyed Thing accidentally slips through a dimensional portal (the klutz), he comes face-to-face with...the Fantastic Four? **$3.50**

GAMBIT #1 **(Marvel)** Brand-spankin' new facts are added to the origin of the X-Men's resident Cajun. **$2.99**

GROO AND RUFFERTO #1 **(Dark Horse)** Silly soldier-of-fortune Groo is separated from his trusty canine companion, Rufferto. Better than "Snoopy, Come Home!" and only **$2.95**

LEGENDS OF THE DC UNIVERSE: CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS **(DC Comics)** It's a "missing chapter" of DC's legendary *Crisis*, featuring the original Flash and Supergirl! **$4.95**

MOON KNIGHT #1 **(Marvel)** Moon Knight finds himself cowl-deep in about 53 government cover-ups. **$2.99**

POISON ELVES COLOR SPECIAL #1 **(Sirius)** For the first time ever, Jace and Lusipher, them thar elves, are in full color. Hence the title. **$2.95**

STAR WARS #1 **(Dark Horse)** Startastic! It's a new ongoing monthly featuring Jedi Knight Ki-Adi-Mundi and his struggle to bring technology to a backwater planet. **$2.50**

SUPERMAN 80-PAGE GIANT #1 **(DC Comics)** Superman hangs out wtih Hitman's pal Six-Pack, meets a new villain and more. **$4.95**

SUPERMAN: A NATION DIVIDED **(DC Comics)** Four score and seven years ago, baby Kal-El landed on Earth in the 1800s and fought in the Civil War. **$4.95**

TEAM X 2000 **(Marvel)** The time-travelin' X-Man Bishop and Shi'ar warrior princess Xena...uh, make that Deathbird, travel to yet another alternate Earth gone horribly wrong. **$3.50**

WITCHBLADE/TOMB RAIDER #1 **(Top Cow/Image)** Video vixen Lara Croft and comic book cutie-pie Sara Pezzini team up for more adventure and ass-kickin'. **$2.95**

WOLVERINE WINTER SPECIAL **(Marvel)** Ten mega-creators jam on short stories featuring everyone's favorite savage Canadian. No, not Mad Dog Vachon, you numskull! Wolverine! **$2.99**

FLASH #145

DC COMICS "Chain Lightning," Part 1 (of 6). Bad guy Cobalt Blue wants to go all the way back in time to kill former Flash Barry Allen before he died in *Crisis on Infinite Earths*. But that could really muck with history and make Ross Perot president or something. So today's Flash, Wally West, must put a stop to Blue's little game. By Mark Waid, Brian Augustyn, Paul Pelletier and Vince Russell. **$1.99**

GREEN LANTERN #109

DC COMICS Kyle Rayner, the Green Lantern we've all come to know and 51 percent of us have come to love, is still off in space meeting space friends and drinking space beer and stuff. So we focus on Jade, the mega-babelicious current GL on Earth. She confronts an evil tormentor from her youth, just in time for the happy-go-lucky holiday season. By Ron Marz, Paul Pelletier and Terry Austin. **$1.99**

GRENDEL: BLACK, WHITE & RED #2 (OF 4)

DARK HORSE When one Grendel just ain't enuff, there's always *Black, White & Red*. This ish ponies up no fewer than five tales of the original Grendel—Hunter Rose, the twisted criminal genius—in black-and-white format with red highlights. Minimum color, maximum story. Written by Matt Wagner with art by five of his bestest buddies including David Mack and Paul Chadwick. **$3.95**

HELLBLAZER #134

Vertigo/DC Comics "Haunted," Part 1 (of 6). When blue-collar English magician John Constantine learns that an old girlfriend has been murdered, he sets out to find her killer, enlisting the aid of some of the nastiest nasties in London. By the new creative team of Warren Ellis and John Higgins. "I want to show American readers a London they've never seen," Ellis says. "Hell, probably a lot of British readers won't have seen what we will show you. I want to show London as it is, with poor bastards who walk the Underground at night with flashlights and hammers. These are the places horror stories come from. I don't know if it's possible to make you puke up lunch or scar your mind by reading a comic book, but I'm going to have a bloody good try." **MR $2.50**

HITMAN #34

DC COMICS Now, for something completely different: Tommy Monaghan, the Hitman who always smokes, rarely shaves and occasionally uses his X-ray vision to see what girlies look like under their clothes, has a heart-to-heart with...Superman? Yep. The two trade views on what being a hero is all about. By our heroes: Garth Ennis, John McCrea and Gary Leach. **$2.50**

INVISIBLES (VOL. 2) #22

VERTIGO/DC COMICS The revolution isn't being televised, but it's certainly in the comics! The Invisibles—a group of freedom fighters battling an unseen, other-dimensional menace—wrap up volume two as team member Ragged Robin travels time...and another member calls it quits. By Grant Morrison and Chris Weston. **MR $2.50**

IRON MAN #13

MARVEL Hey, it beats the Betty Ford Center. After having his butt kicked real good over the past year, Iron Man Tony Stark checks into the Basel Stress Clinic. But wouldn't ya know it, it looks like the clinic's run by the villainous Controller! This 48-page monstrosity is brought to you by Kurt Busiek, Sean Chen and Larry Stucker. **$2.99**

JLA #26

DC COMICS The Shaggy Man attacks, while Scooby cowers in the Mystery Machine and Fred and Daphne make out. Nah, that's not quite right. We'll try again: The Shaggy Man, a nigh-indestructible robot, attacks the JLA, but Batman saves the day 'cause he always does. That sound better? Thought so. By Grant Morrison, Stephen Scott and John Dell. **$1.99**

JLA/TITANS #3 (OF 3)

DC COMICS Hey! *JLA/Titans* is the Reese's Peanut Butter Cup of comics! It's two great tastes that taste great together! And as this mini-series draws to a close (and sets up January's *Titans* ongoing!), the five original Titans find out that they're more than just a team—they're a family. Aww. Peanut-butter writing by Devin K. Grayson meets chocolate art by Phil Jimenez. **$2.95**

THE KINGDOM #1-#2

DC COMICS Off in the future, über-powered badass Gog killed Superman. And get this—he liked it so much, he went back in time to when Superman was still alive and did it again. And again. And again. Get the picture? Good. Now Gog has almost worked his way back to *our* time, and the Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman of the *Kingdom Come* future have to put the kibosh on Gog's rampage. As if that wasn't enough, *Nightstar* (featuring the

SOUND BITES

"IF GRUNGE CAN DISGUISE HIMSELF AS FAIRCHILD'S BED, CAN HE DISGUISE HIMSELF AS A 22-YEAR-OLD MAN SO HE CAN BUY BEER?"

—*John Arcudi, Gen[13] writer (Wizard #79, March 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

I'm not fat, I'm getting in shape!

Hello there, children!

You wanna know what I think?

Let me sing you a little song...

MPH RMPH MP HRMPH!

FINALLY, FREEDOM OF #$%& SPEECH.

Sweet, check me out.

Oh my God! They killed Kenny!

Yeah, I want cheesy poofs.

It's salisbury steak day!

I'm not fat, I'm big boned!

MMR MHPHR!

Bleeecht!

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daughter of Nightwing and Starfire), *Kid Flash* (Flash's daughter), *Offspring* (Plastic Man's son), *Son of the Bat* (Batman's son, duh) and *Planet Krypton* (taking place at the superhero-theme restaurant) one-shots tie into the whole thingamabob. Whew! All written by the very busy Mark Waid, with art by a whole buttload of guys. **$2.95 each—#1-#2; $1.99—one-shots.**

NIGHTWING #28

DC COMICS Former Batman sidekick Dick Grayson breaks out his junior-detective kit as Nightwing and gets closer to finding out who the new mass-murderer in Blüdhaven is. But the clues keep pointing to Nightwing's ally, the Huntress! What's goin' on here? Only Chuck Dixon, Scott McDaniel and Karl Story know for sure. **$1.99**

PREACHER #46

VERTIGO/DC COMICS It's all-out war between preacher (and new sheriff of Salvation, Texas) Jesse Custer and...the local meat-packing plant? Yep. Jesse's got the Word of God on his side, but The Meatman (that's the plant owner) has lawyer/dominatrix Miss Oatlash on his! Only in Vertigo. By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. **MR $2.50**

ROBIN #61

DC COMICS It's a grab-bag o' fun in *Robin* #61 as creators Chuck Dixon, Staz Johnson and Stan Woch bring us a smorgasbord of comicy treats. "The issue starts with team-up action between Robin and Nightwing," Dixon says. So we got superhero stuff. Check. "But the main thrust," according to Dixon, "is Robin's search for the killer of his classmate, Philmont Derlinger. And he *does* discover who the killer is in this issue!" So we got

alsoshipping

MORE BOOKS TO GET

BATMAN BOOKS (DC Comics) Yow! Gotham's Mayor Grange gets assassinated in *Batman* #562, while over in *Detective Comics* #729, Robin and Nightwing play "Beat the Clock" on a bridge that's 30 seconds from blowing up! **$1.99 each**

CAPTAIN AMERICA BOOKS (Marvel) The Red Skull's back in *Captain America* #14! And Iron Man guest-stars in *Captain America: Sentinel of Liberty* #6. ***Cap*–$1.99; *Sentinel*–$2.99**

CLERKS HOLIDAY SPECIAL (Oni Press) Is that Santa living in a rented room next to the Quick Stop? Clerks Dante and Randal sure think so. **$2.95**

CRIMSON #7 (Cliffhanger/Image) Seven angels visit teen-age vampire Alex Elder on Christmas Day. Hope they bring presents. **$2.50**

CURSE OF THE SPAWN #28 (Todd McFarlane Productions/Image) Suture the serial killer kidnaps a prominent psychotherapist. **$1.95**

DARKCHYLDE: THE LEGACY #3 (Majesty/Image) Those wacky serial killers won't stop! Child-killer "Silencer" plagues Ariel Chylde. **$2.50**

FANTASTIC FOUR #14 (Marvel) The FF travel to the moon, but forget to book 21 days in advance and the airlines really stick it to 'em. **$1.99**

GEN[13] #36 (WildStorm/Image) Longtime Gen-gang mentor John Lynch is out and Alex Fairchild's in as the guy in charge. **$2.50**

INCREDIBLE HULK #473 (Marvel) The Hulk visits a voyeur convention: He goes to the homeworld of the Watchers! **$1.99**

MUTANT X #5 (Marvel) Havok is torn between loyalty to his wife and his own code of honor when wifey gets ready to kill someone! **$1.99**

PITT #20 (Full Bleed) Sorcerer Urgral Thul wants Pitt's life...and his soul! **$2.50**

PUNISHER #4 (Marvel) The mini-series wraps up as Hell comes to Manhattan! And you thought the subways were stinky *now*. **$2.99**

SPAWN #81 (Todd McFarlane Productions/Image) Spawn takes a good, long look at his past and decides he's a real bastard. **$1.95**

SPIDER-MAN BOOKS (Marvel) Doctor Doom and Doctor Octopus drop by in *Spider-Man: Chapter One* #4. New villain Shadraq (no relation to Shaquille O'Neal) swings by in *Amazing Spider-Man* #2. Verily! Thor, God of Thunder, storms into *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* #2. **$1.99 each; *Chapter One*–$2.50**

STAR WARS BOOKS (Dark Horse) Mara invades the hidden base of a Black Nebula crime lord in *Mara Jade–By the Emperor's Hand* #5. Kyp Durron faces the beast that ate a thousand colonists in *Jedi Academy–Leviathan* #3. And political assassinations continue in *Crimson Empire–Council of Blood* #2. **$2.95 each**

SUPERMAN BOOKS (DC Comics) Supes has bad dreams of nuclear holocaust in *Adventures of Superman* #564. Whoa, looks like a prophecy! Supes helps repair a leaking nuclear reactor in *Action Comics* #751. More disasters plague Earth in *Superman: The Man of Steel* #86. And in *Superman* #142, Big Blue decides he must ditch the "Clark Kent" routine and just be Superman full-time. **$1.99 each**

WOLVERINE #134-#135 (Marvel) Guest stars? Here we go: The Human Torch, Elektra, Moon Knight, Black Widow, the Vision, the Starjammers and a buncha others all pop up to take down a possessed Wolverine! **$1.99 each**

"I FIND IT LOVELY TO LOOK AT A BEAUTIFUL BODY—A MAN'S OR A WOMAN'S—AND SEE A GOOD STORY UNFOLD."
—*Christina Z., co-writer of* Witchblade *(Wizard #77, January 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

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videogames

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on the edge

CHOCOLATE THUNDER #1

GETTOSAKE COMICS No, it's not the latest limited-time-only shake at McDonalds. And it's not Darryl Dawkins, the 1970s dunk-master basketball star who claimed he was from "Planet Love-Tron." Nope. This "Chocolate Thunder" is Kevin King, a master of 17 martial arts (as if 16 weren't enough) with a 200 IQ who's also, in the words of publisher Gettosake Comics, "a bad mutha...something." Hey, was that an Isaac Hayes soundtrack we heard? Looks like the days of early-'70s blaxploitation are back! We've come a long way, baby. Or maybe not. **$2.95**

detective mystery/suspense stuff. Check. "And," says Dixon, "something never before seen in comics: Robin and his pregnant girlfriend Stephanie Brown—The Spoiler—go to their first Lamaze class." So we got the unfortunate-repercussions-of-our-wild-actions angle covered. Check. It's a wrap! **$1.99**

SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE #70

VERTIGO/DC COMICS The final (*sniff*, *sob*, say it ain't so!) chapter in this series about the cases of Golden Age Sandman Wesley Dodds arrives as Wesley wraps up a military mystery and makes a *big* request of wife-to-be Dian Belmont. Take a bow as the theater lights go down. By Steven T. Seagle and Guy Davis. **MR $2.50**

SAVAGE DRAGON #56

IMAGE Writer/penciler/inker Erik Larsen promises this'll be, "The greatest 56th issue of *Savage Dragon* ever!" Who are we to argue? Longtime cast members William Jonson and Rita Medermade are about to be married. But Jonson's evil twin does what all evil twins do: Something evil! He kidnaps Rita, and only Dragon can save the day. **$2.50**

STRANGERS IN PARADISE #20

ABSTRACT STUDIO It's Katchoo's first honest-to-gosh art exhibit, so she and "longtime companion" Francine show up for networking, schmoozing...and a fist-fight or two. Things get hairy when old boyfriends, old girlfriends and snooty art critics show up. Writes, pencils, inks, letters and reconstructive dental work by Terry Moore. **$2.75**

THOR #8

MARVEL Your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man shows up when the new, evil gods currently inhabiting Asgard make their first big, badass move. Tokkots, one of these "Dark Gods," journeys to Earth to wreak havoc and unexpectedly encounters Spidey! So what's Spidey do? He calls on the Thunder God, natch! By Dan Jurgens, John Romita Jr. and Klaus Janson. Jurgens says, "*Thor* #8 tells not only the story of a team-up between Thor and Spider-Man, but a team-up between [alter-egos] Jake Olson and Peter Parker as well. We'll find that they have a special sort of bond." **$1.99**

THUNDERBOLTS #23

MARVEL The old order changeth! One T-Bolt leaves the team and surrenders to authorities for past crimes. But a new member is rip-roarin' and ready to step in! All the while, U.S.Agent and the new Citizen V wait in the wings! Players are all over the field, but only Kurt Busiek, Mark Bagley and Scott Hanna have a scorecard. **$1.99**

TRANSMETROPOLITAN #18

VERTIGO/DC COMICS Rogue journalist Spider Jerusalem is hip-deep in coverage of the presidential election when he stumbles across a dreadful secret kept by a vice-presidential candidate. But will Spider write the scandalous story? Let's hope not. We *wish* we never heard the word "Lewinsky." By Warren Ellis, Darick Robertson and Rodney Ramos. **$2.50**

"THE X-MEN ARE THE ULTIMATE DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY."
—*Joe Kelly, then-X-Men writer (Wizard #79, March 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

UNCANNY X-MEN #365

MARVEL It's Christmas for the X-Men! But instead of presents and hot apple cider, the not-so-merry mutants have to deal with one member's ghosts of Christmas past. And hey, there's even a homecoming for team founder Professor X! By Steve Seagle, Chris Bachalo and Tim Townsend. "It's bizarre," stresses Seagle. "It's easily the most experimental issue of *Uncanny* I've ever done. We're even doing experimental things with art. There's going to be cool, weird stuff with text on illustration and illustration on text. Despite how weird it is, it's pretty personal and quite heartwarming." **$1.99**

X-MEN #84-#85

MARVEL The all-out battle with Cerebro comes to a climax in *X-Men* #84. And in #85? Just a little something called "The Return of Magneto!" The X-Men's oldest foe is back, and lookin' to snipe the ass of Joseph, the man we all thought *was* Magneto! By Joe Kelly and Adam Kubert (#84), and Kelly, Alan Davis and Mark Farmer (#85). **$1.99 each**

characterprofile

RAP SHEET

SPAWN

REGENERATION: Even having his head cut off means nuthin' to ol' Spawny-guy. He just grows a new one. (*Spawn* #68–#69)

ENERGY BOMBS: Rescuing a woman from would-be rapists, Spawn taught 'em some manners with a smoking, floating, exploding bit of necroplasm. (*Spawn* #1)

CHAIN LINK: Spawn can manipulate his chains as a weapon, which he did to remove pedophile Billy Kincaid's head. (*Spawn* #53)

HEALING TOUCH: Spawn saved his former wife's dying husband by transferring some of his power into the comatose man. (*Spawn* #50)

TELEKINESIS: Spawny-guy can mentally manipulate inanimate objects, such as strangling military guards with telephone cords. (*Spawn* #55)

SHAPESHIFTING: Not having a real body (it's just necroplasm covered by a costume), Spawn can reshape his fingers into spikes, impaling attackers on their razor-sharp edges. (*Spawn* #53)

SHARING CLOTHES: Spawn's costume is actually a sentient life form grafted to his body. Eww. (*Spawn* #51)

WORM CONTROL: Spawn telepathically communicates with his worms who help nurture and strengthen his costume. (*Spawn* #55, #59)

INVULNERABLE: Spawn can take a serious licking. He willingly threw himself out of a plane to save some time, and tried killing himself just to prove it was impossible. (*Spawn* #55, #66)

CAPE SIDE: Even Spawn's cape is a weapon. It can kill, knock someone unconscious, provide cover, rescue a child or propel Spawn to enormous heights. (*Spawn* #57, #59)

ORIGIN

When covert operative Al Simmons was murdered on an order from his boss, Jason Wynn, Al went to Hell. Literally. There, he struck a deal with the devilish Malebolgia to return and see his wife again. In exchange, Simmons would lead an army against Heaven in a coming war. Malebolgia tricked the new Hellspawn, however, and by the time Al found his wife (some five years later), she had married his best friend. Stuck on Earth in a body made of a powerful, magical substance called necroplasm, Spawn watches over his former family and friends as he struggles to figure out how he fits into a war between Heaven and Hell, with Earth stuck in the middle.

NOW APPEARING

Spawn co-writer Brian Holguin promises Spawn is through moping about his former wife. "He's done that for six years. It's time to quit whining." January's *Spawn* #80 will wrap up a detective story. "Someone's been killing the homeless, and while we'll have a conclusion, it will also tie into something much bigger: the return of an early, big villain–now more powerful than ever." Holguin says readers will also learn more about Spawn's often-less-than-helpful buddy, Cogliostro. "Hell still wants the renegade Cog, and they'll be sending someone for him." The whole thing ties in with a spring launch of the new tentatively titled *Dark Ages of Spawn* book.

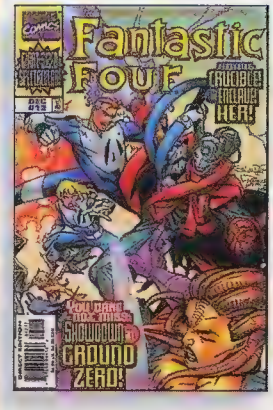
REPORT card

COMIC BOOK REVIEWS

BY *WIZARD* EDITORS BRIAN CUNNINGHAM, DOUG GOLDSTEIN AND MIKE SEARLE

FANTASTIC FOUR

Villain-free family fun



ISSUES REVIEWED: #6-#12
GENRE: Superhero action/adventure
PUBLISHER: Marvel Comics
CREATIVE TEAM: Chris Claremont, Salvador Larroca and Art Thibert
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $1.99/Monthly

What You Need to Know: Exposure to cosmic rays in space gave Reed Richards, Sue Storm, Johnny Storm and Ben Grimm incredible powers. They joined forces to become the Fantastic Four as Mr. Fantastic, the Invisible Woman, the Human Torch and the Thing. Now with Reed and Sue's son Franklin, the FF live in their Manhattan Pier 4 warehouse headquarters.

The Good: The current storylines are tailored to spotlight what makes *Fantastic Four* work best—a tight-knit family. One storyline, featuring other-dimensional bounty hunters' attempting to kidnap Franklin, brings out the angry mother in Sue, and a body-jumping trip through the country of Genosha forces Reed to recognize his wife's love for him even though she's occupying another body.

Despite what they're going through, the reader can enjoy how the team members are consistently written. Johnny Storm is as flamboyant a prankster as ever (best seen in issue #9), Sue is portrayed as the glue holding the team together, Ben is the gruff softie and Reed is the analytical thinker, even in a fight (*FF* #10).

Readers can enjoy new twists with these characters as well. Sue's actively using her powers to back up her martial arts attacks in issue #6 when she fights with a staff made from her force field. Even Reed manipulates his elastic body for extra punching power in issue #10.

The art team does a good job of presenting an environment firmly established in Marvel's New York. We're treated to an issue guest starring Spider-Man, plus cameos of Dr. Strange and the FF's old Four Freedoms Plaza headquarters, not to mention a trip to a New York Yankees baseball game.

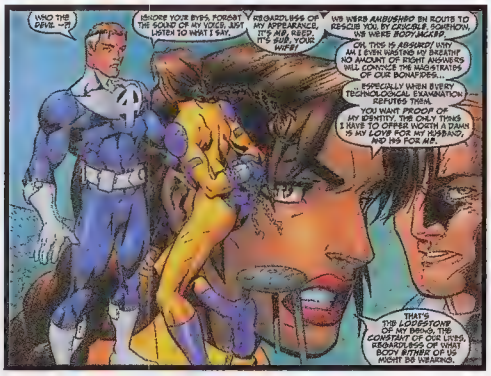
The Bad: The threats are usually tedious and, in the end, boring. The villains are mostly X-Men and Excalibur rejects such as Technet, Genosha, Opal Luna-Saturnyne and (God help us!) the Captain Britain Corps. The situations these villains created were meant to be dramatic, but instead accented their dullness. When the FF is swarmed by a cadre of Captain Britains in issue #7, it looked absurd. When Eternity, Infinity and Galactus are shown pointlessly hanging around Roma's pad in #8, the scene is intended to be impressive, but instead comes across as silly.

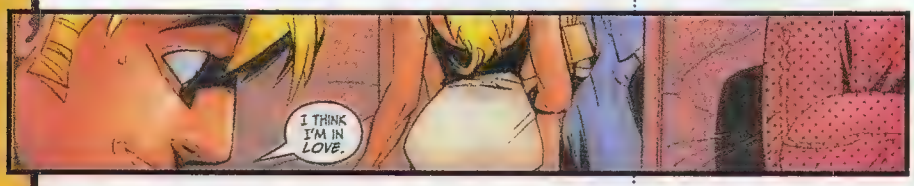
Speaking of looking odd, the book can often get too wordy, jamming as many word balloons as possible onto a page.

Lastly, the family feel of the book can sometimes go overboard with melodramatic dialogue—so much so that it's sickening. It's one thing to show that Sue and Reed are in love, it's another for Sue to describe their love as "the lodestone of my being" in issue #12. *Groan.*

The Buzz: Fans came for the hoopla of the "Heroes Return" relaunch, and stayed for the stories. The book's a consistent top seller.

The Skinny: The FF members are presented in character, but need to shake off the legion of third-rate villains they've been facing. ■





Yow! Lookit that cornball dialogue!

The book portrays the FF very well. Here, Johnny Storm is his usual randy self.

THE GRADE: B-

SOUND BITES "I AM SELF-INDULGENT ENOUGH WHERE I WILL DO ANYTHING I WANT JUST TO MAKE MYSELF HAPPY."
—*Erik Larsen on* Savage Dragon *#50 (Wizard #80, April 1998)*
THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

CRIMSON
No bite

ISSUES REVIEWED: #1-#5
GENRE: Supernatural action/adventure
PUBLISHER: Cliffhanger/ Image Comics
CREATIVE TEAM: Brian Augustyn, Humberto Ramos and Sandra Hope
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $2.50/Monthly

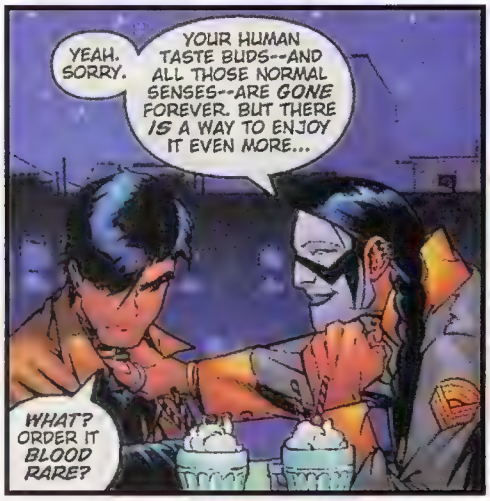
What You Need to Know: One night Alex Elder is killed by a vampire, only to be resurrected as one of the undead himself. Now he must figure out how to deal with this strange new state of being as well as puzzle out his new, mysterious purpose.

The Good: Flashy, cartoony art, aided by beautiful coloring, lends a gorgeous, detailed look to the series. The artwork alone presents a refreshingly hip and modern view of vampires which is vastly different from the 19th-century, Bram Stoker, cape-and-cowl creatures of the night.

A few of the ideas in *Crimson* are neat and have potential. Working from the standard Judeo-Christian creation myth, the story introduces fantasy elements such as dragons and vampires into our world (we wished these elements would be worked into the main plot). In issue #2, we get an original take on vampires—since Alex is dead, his sense of taste is gone, and so he can only enjoy a juicy hamburger by "channeling the memory" with his newfound powers to experience the pleasure of food again.

The Bad: The book goes nowhere! *Crimson*'s main plot—Alex hunting the vampire that bit him—sputters and vanishes completely as of issue #3. What's Alex's mysterious destiny? We'd like to know, because not enough clues are given.

On top of that, the book is full of silly plot contrivances (such as when Alex and his friends jump out of their car to escape vampires when all they have to do is drive off in issue #1), and excessive head-chopping, neck-biting violence; when the violence is meant to have effect, we're already numb to it.



As far as the cast is concerned, the stories show only shallow characters rather than real personalities. We're supposed to identify with Alex and sympathize with his predicament, but how can we when Alex barely expresses any human traits? For example, in issue #3, Alex's girlfriend is murdered, yet only three panels deal with his feelings over her death and Alex displays no sadness or grief, only hatred for the vampire that did it. Even worse is Alex's flaky sidekick Joe who comes across as a annoying fool trying way too hard to be hip; at one point, he even dances to the tune of "YMCA" for no good reason.

The Buzz: The lowest profile Cliffhanger member has pulled off two surprises: it's a top 25 seller and an on-time monthly Cliffhanger book.

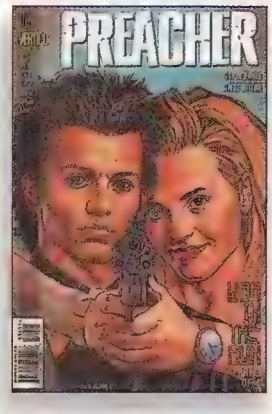
The Skinny: Been there, done that. So far, 90 percent of *Crimson* is a vampire cliché we've seen before. Instead of exciting us with novel concepts and interesting stories, it ends up empty and undead. ■

Crimson has some neat ideas. When Alex learns vampires can't taste anything, he's told to "channel the memory" of what things taste like.

Could someone put a stake in this guy? Joe, Alex's sidekick, is one of the most annoying characters in comics.

THE GRADE: C

PREACHER
Spread the word



ISSUES REVIEWED: #34-#44
GENRE: Mature action/adventure
PUBLISHER: Vertigo/DC Comics
CREATIVE TEAM: Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $2.50/Monthly

What You Need to Know: Jesse Custer is a washed-up minister in a small Texas town when a half-angel/half-demon being escapes from Heaven and merges with his soul. Given the power of "The Word," Jesse can control people's actions with his voice. Jesse, his girlfriend Tulip and vampire friend Cassidy set out on a mission to find God, who has abandoned Heaven and roams the Earth, and set Him straight.

The Good: If you want great storytelling, read *Preacher*. A whole lot of things click to make it one of the best comics out there.

Issue in and issue out, the "anything goes," over-the-top situations Jesse and company find themselves in are highly entertaining. In the "War in the Sun" storyline (#34-#37), Starr has commandeered a full military tank division and trapped Jesse, Tulip and a blanket-covered Cassidy in the middle of the desert; as if that weren't bad enough, the Saint of Killers, an unstoppable supernatural killing force, shows up to kill Jesse first. Then in #38 and #39, Starr ends up falling into the hands of a trio of cannibalistic brothers. Add a cinematic art style and razor-sharp dialogue to these situations and you've got some action-packed page-flippers.

The characters are fascinating as well. Jesse is a complex man—he's ornery, tough, sensitive, determined and on a mission to find God. Cassidy, in the meantime, would like to be a good friend but instead throws himself at Tulip. And Tulip comes across as assertive, even though she's barely holding it all together, popping pills since she believes Jesse is dead (#37).

Then you've got the villains: Herr Starr, a ruthless and cunning self-anointed world savior who will stop at nothing to get what he wants. And Odin Quincannon, a quirky, full-of-himself, dweebish corporate mogul who practically owns the town of Salvation, Texas, where Jesse currently resides as sheriff; Quincannon even refers to himself in the third person! With eccentric, flavorful characters grounded in reality, you can't help but be hooked every month.

The Bad: Compared to the high-octane pace of most previous *Preacher* stories, "War in the Sun" could have been shortened to three parts and the current "Jesse as sheriff" story arc has slowed the series down a tad.

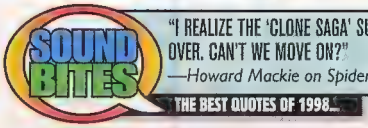
Also, some characters seem "eccentric for the sake of eccentricity" such as the NASA-hating Johnny Lee Wombat (#39) or the former Nazi spy Gunther Hahn (#44). Their individual stories come off more as filler and distract from the main plot.

The Buzz: Vertigo's flagship title is still going strong. With five trade paperbacks, a potential movie deal in the works and the name "Garth Ennis" in the credit box, you can't get much more buzz than on *Preacher*.

The Skinny: Minus costumes and capes, *Preacher* has everything a comic fan could ever want—high-impact plots, fascinating characters, black humor, you name it. Our fanboy prayers are answered. ■

One other great thing about Preacher*: it can be the most hysterically twisted book around. The villain Herr Starr provides most of the book's funny moments.*

THE GRADE: A



"I REALIZE THE 'CLONE SAGA' SUCKED, BUT IT WAS A STORY. AND A STORY THAT IS NOW WELL OVER. CAN'T WE MOVE ON?"
—*Howard Mackie on Spider-Man (Wizard #84, August 1998)*

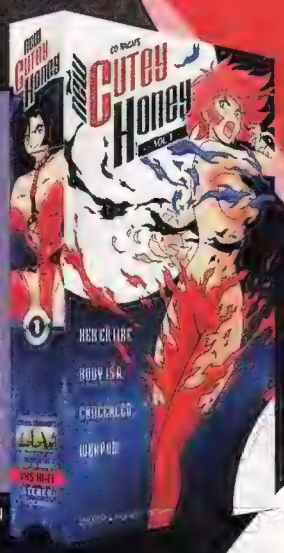
ADV FILMS PRESENTS:

NEW CUTEY HONEY

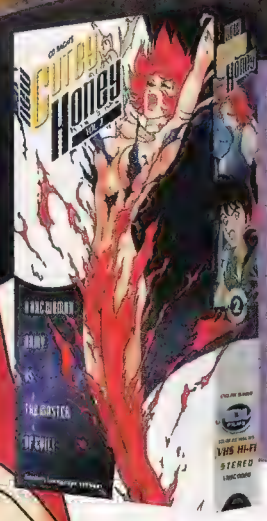
NEW ENGLISH DUBBED
VOL.1 + VOL.2

THE ORIGINAL HEAVY METAL HEROINE IS BACK!

VOL.1
Having decimated the ranks of Dolmeck's henchmen, the beautiful Cutey Honey finds herself the target of his most deadly accomplices! Can Cutey Honey withstand the concentrated onslaught of Saline, Peeping Spider and the venomous Black Maiden?



ACTUAL BOX ART SHOWN



VOL.2
Rampant action, gobs of gratuitous nudity and ridiculously graphic violence are just the beginning! Fans of femmes fatales will have a field day watching the luscious Cutey Honey in her incredible adventures.

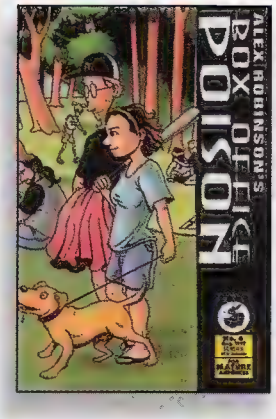
AVAILABLE AT:
SUNCOAST MOTION PICTURE COMPANY
AND OTHER FINE STORES

check us out:
WWW.ADVFILMS.COM

NEW CUTEY HONEY © 1994 Go Nagai / Dynamic Planning, Inc. / Toei Video Co., Ltd.

BOX OFFICE POISON

Another successful series about nothing



ISSUES REVIEWED: #1-#11, #0
GENRE: Mature relationship comedy/drama
PUBLISHER: Antarctic Press
CREATOR: Alex Robinson
PRICE/FREQUENCY: $2.95/ sorta bimonthly

What You Need to Know: Sherman is an unhappy bookstore employee, who has moved into a New York City apartment with lovers Stephen and Jane, and dates their ex-roommate Dorothy. Meanwhile his friend and cartoonist Ed fights to get old-time comic creator Irving Flavor his due with Zoom Comics.

The Good: It's rare to find such a collection of true-to-life characters in a comic book as you'll find in *Box Office Poison*. But it's more than just the characters that makes this subdued "Seinfeld"-esque book appealing—it's the honesty of it all—the people, the environment, the emotions—that gives you the feeling that these stories really happened somewhere.

You can identify with these people, since they face the same relationship, job and apartment problems many of us face as well. The overweight Ed wants a girlfriend badly, but never notices it when a girl is actually interested in him. Jane despises Dorothy from their turbulent days as roommates; when Sherman considers breaking up with Dorothy, Jane's embarrassed to be elated. Even the irresponsible alcoholic Dorothy can be portrayed in a sympathetic light. When she lapses into an alcoholic binge, she lazily leaves an open wine bottle on the floor for her dog to consume; the dog falls into a coma, is taken to the hospital and dies. As Dorothy sobs in the waiting room, the dog is shown going to "doggie heaven." Trying to overcome her grief issues later, she buys *two* dogs for Christmas.

The Irving Flavor vs. Zoom Comics subplot is an engaging, yet sad, allegory for the legal battles that comic pioneers such as Superman creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, and Marvel legend Jack Kirby fought against big publishing conglomerates for creator ownership and artistic rights in the '70s and '80s.

The Bad: Except for the subplot of Flavor's quest against Zoom, and the ongoing relationship troubles between Sherman and Dorothy, there isn't any main plot driving this book forward. There isn't even a main character, since Sherman serves as more of a hub that ties the characters together than as the book's star; he doesn't even make an appearance in some stories. While it adds to the "real-life" flavor of the book (How many real people have ongoing plotlines in their lives?), it can make the book seem directionless in retrospect.

The book also has small annoying problems. Words are often misspelled or left out completely, and often the art is a bit on the rough side.

The Buzz: Sadly, *Box Office Poison* is a virtual unknown product among comic fans.

The Skinny: There are so many honest-to-God human characters and moments in here that you almost don't realize there's no main thrust to the book.

The turbulent relationship of Dorothy and Sherman has its humorous moments (like here) and very sad ones, too.

BOP *is very human comic. Who hasn't wanted to go back in time and tell himself everything'll be okay like Jane does (in a daydream)?*

THE GRADE: B+

SOUND BITES — THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

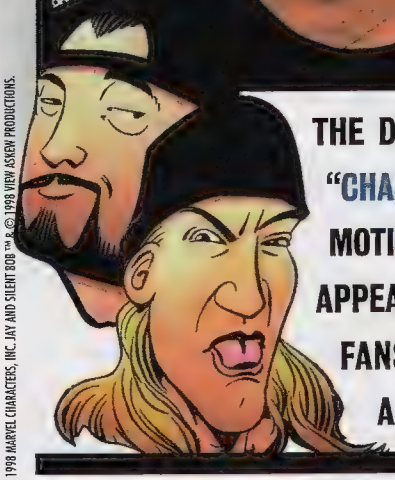
"I NEVER THOUGHT I'D FIND MYSELF WRITING A COMIC BOOK—OR EVEN BE IN THE MARVEL OFFICES, FOR THAT MATTER."
—*Kevin Smith, Daredevil writer (Wizard #86, October 1998)*

JULY 16-18, 1999

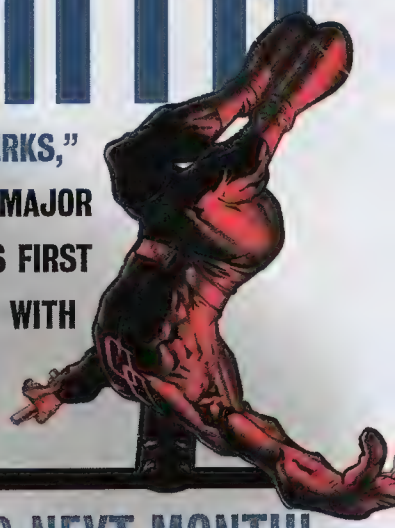
ROSEMONT CONVENTION CENTER

1999 GUEST OF HONOR

KEVIN SMITH



THE DIRECTOR OF ACCLAIMED FILMS "CLERKS," "CHASING AMY" AND THE FORTHCOMING MAJOR MOTION PICTURE "DOGMA" WILL MAKE HIS FIRST APPEARANCE AT WIZARD WORLD TO MEET WITH FANS AND SIGN COPIES OF DAREDEVIL AND CLERKS COMIC BOOKS.



MORE SPECIAL GUESTS TO BE ANNOUNCED NEXT MONTH!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WIZARD WORLD CHICAGO OR IF YOU NEED WIZARD, VISIT US ONLINE AT www.WizardWorld.com

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RANDY QUEEN PRESENTS:

CONTEST

Darkchylde Trivia!

PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE (1): One lucky nightmare-sufferer will win two pages of original *Darkchylde* art, a Darkchylde ace edition signed by Randy Queen, a Darkchylde T-shirt, a Darkchylde hat, a Randy Queen-signed *Darkchylde: The Legacy* #1 and a signed *Darkchylde* trade paperback.

SECOND PRIZE (10): Ten Ariel-ists each win a Darkchylde hat, Darkchylde ace edition signed by Randy Queen and a Randy Queen-signed *Darkchylde: The Legacy #1*.

WANNA GET YOUR MITTS ON THIS GREAT STUFF? Simply answer the trivia questions below, put your answers on the entry form, stick it in an envelope and race on down to the post office. We'll choose randomly from all the correct entries and pick some winners. Hurry, before it gets dark!

1. What is Ariel's middle name?
2. What town did Ariel live in before moving to Salem?
3. What is Ariel's street address in Salem?
4. What is the name of the stuffed dog on Ariel's bed?
5. What movie was Perry's father watching when he was introduced to the series?
6. How tall is Ariel?

THIS CONTEST IS SPONSORED BY RANDY QUEEN (LEFT), WHO CAN NOT ONLY WRITE AND DRAW, BUT ACT AS WELL.

ENTER NOW!

Fill this out and put it in an envelope. Send it to:
"Darkchylde Trivia!" Contest,
c/o Wizard Entertainment,
P.O. Box 118,
Congers, NY 10920-0118

THE LEGAL NIGHTMARE

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Entertainment, Randy Queen, their immediate families and psychoanalysts. Imagine what they'd think of Ariel if they psychoanalyzed her and interpreted her dreams. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip, e-mail address and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "Darkchylde Trivia!" Contest, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Entertainment and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Would you volunteer to go into space to save the world if when you came back you didn't have to pay these taxes? Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by January 29, 1999.** Wizard Entertainment is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Winners will be selected by random drawing from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Entertainment. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be notified no later than March 5, 1999. If an entrant, having been declared as a winner, does not accept the prize or the prize or prize notification is undeliverable, another entry will be selected. In the event that a prize is not available or it becomes impossible for the sponsor to award the prize which has been designated, the sponsor retains the right to substitute a prize or product of equal value to the winner. Determination of whether a prize or product is of equal value is in the sole discretion of the sponsor. Winning entries will be selected on or about February 12, 1999.

For a list of winners, available after February 12, 1999 send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "Darkchylde Trivia!" Winners List, c/o Wizard Entertainment, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

"Darkchylde Trivia!" Contest Entry Form

CONTEST DEADLINE JANUARY 29, 1999!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address _____ Phone Number (with area code) _____

ANSWERS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

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FUSHIGI YÛGI
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MANGA NEVER 'SCENE'

Three manga that haven't made it to America, but should...

Ho, ho, ho. It's the holiday season, and this year manga fans have had a lot to be jolly about. Some of the manga titles Western fans are hot for came to America in 1998, among them *Video Girl Ai, Futaba-kun Change!* and *Fushigi Yûgi,* while others—such as Tamaki Hisao's *Star Wars* manga—have met demands fans didn't know they had.

It's been a very good year.

But a fan's wish list is never truly exhausted, and this—the ultimate season of wish lists—is the time to reflect on some of the deserving manga that *didn't* make it to America. This month, *Wizard* peeks into three great Japanese comic book series drawn from different areas of the manga world—a shonen (boys') action/adventure tale, a shonen high-school comedy and a shojo (girls') science-fiction story.

Cityhunter

This guy's a one-man "A-Team." He has all the firepower of B.A. Baracus coupled with the sex drive of Face-Man. He's Ryo Saeba, the Cityhunter, a wealthy playboy who also happens to be one of Tokyo's ace private investigators.

Ryo's all business when it counts, but if there's a pretty lady nearby, he turns into a groping, eight-armed octopus in fairly short order. Fortunately for his female clients, Ryo has a partner who comes armed with her own libido-smashing mallet—Kaori Makimura. While Ryo is skilled with weapons, vehicles and sleuthing, Kaori is the level-headed business brains of the team—and the one who keeps Ryo in line. Which is a full-time job since most of Ryo's cases involve locating a missing woman, protecting a woman, spying on a woman...well, to say any more would be to belabor the obvious.

Tsukasa Hojo's *Cityhunter* contains an attractive blend of action/adventure, comedy and sexual tension that brings to mind "Moonlighting," the '80s detective show that launched Bruce Willis' career. Hojo couples a great art style with dynamic storytelling and enjoyable characters that make for a satisfying reading experience. Those who enjoy *Gunsmith Cats* will get a kick out of *Cityhunter.*

GUNSMITHS Ryo and Kaori are Tokyo's toughest private investigators in *Cityhunter.*

BY PAUL SUDLOW

Sanshiro²

If Akira Toriyama (*Dr. Slump, Dragonball*) has a doppleganger running around, it has to be Kikuchi Shota. Shota has an art style and humor reminiscent of Toriyama's and *Sanshiro²* (*Sanshiro Jijyo*) shows it off in all its grand and insanely funny glory.

Sanshiro² is a tale of two people named Sanshiro. One Sanshiro is the hapless, sole grandson of an aging kenpo master who wants to leave his dojo in capable hands. Unfortunately, Sanshiro isn't very handy with martial arts, and is relieved when it transpires that his elder sister must marry another kenpo master's son—also named Sanshiro. Only *this* Sanshiro isn't a boy at all, as it turns out, but a cute, bespectacled girl from the country—who also happens to be a kenpo master! Looks like our lad Sanshiro isn't off the hook after all....

Sanshiro² is a hilarious blend of wacky characters (two of Sanshiro's pals constantly wear hockey masks *á la* Jason from "Friday the 13th," and a Hulk Hogan double serves as gym teacher), clever stories, plenty of effective sight gags and character designs lending themselves to a variety of exaggerated expressions. *Sanshiro²* has a style all its own, and is well worth seeking out, especially for fans of *Dragonball* or Johji Manabe's *Outlanders.*

Please Save My Earth

Japanese schoolgirl Alice—named after the "Alice in Wonderland" character—begins having vivid dreams about a past life as a human, but not Earth-born, scientist studying our world from a moon base (her life on the other side of the looking glass, as it were). She begins to worry about her mental health, but soon meets six other kids who share the same dream—and none are ever the same again.

ANIMEPICK

ANIME FILM OF THE MONTH

Revolutionary Girl Utena: Crest of the Rose

(Software Sculptures, 100 minutes, $24.99 dubbed or $29.99 subtitled)

Once upon a time, a dashing prince on a white horse came to the aid of a young maiden and gave her his signet ring to remember him by. Extremely impressed, the girl decided *she'd* be a prince when she grew up! And so she did...after a fashion.

Beautiful and athletic Utena—who defies convention by wearing a boy's uniform to school—is the idol of her classmates at the exclusive Ohtori Academy. But she is soon drawn into the affairs of the school's secret society when she comes to the rescue of a beautiful but passive girl named Anthy—the Bride of the Rose. After fighting a duel with Anthy's "guardian," Utena finds herself the mysterious girl's custodian, and learns that her ring brings with it secrets—and obligations—all its own.

Revolutionary Girl Utena is a sweeping, beautiful and surreal shojo saga of romance, adventure, comedy...and betrayal. There are sword duels, dashing leads, sudden plot reversals and moments of horror as well as joy—all wrapped up in a wheels-within-wheels plot in which no character is who he or she seems. If you like shojo science fiction and fantasy, *Revolutionary Girl Utena* is your kind of anime. If you haven't tried a shojo anime before, this is a great place to start, in the first of four tapes that will encompass 13 episodes in all. ■

YOU WANT A WHAT? When it comes to revolution, Marx, Lenin and Castro have nothing on Utena.

Saki Hiwatari's *Please Save My Earth* (*Boku no Chikyuu o Mamotte*) is a powerful tale of love, atonement and sacrifice. The characters, each the reincarnated soul of one of the Luna scientists, must come to grips with their past lives and the fateful decisions they made as disease raged through their small moon colony. Hiwatari's art style is both provocative and elegant and her storytelling is top-notch. Like many other shojo artists, she shifts rapidly from pathos to humor to relieve tension, and back again just as swiftly. Those whose manga tastes run to *Fushigi Yûgi* and *X/1999* are sure to enjoy this title as well.

And Then Some...

There's always more. For comedy try Izumi Matsumoto's *Kimaguri Orange Road*, Egawa Tatsuya's *Magical Taruruuto-kun* or Fujihiko Hosono's *Sasuga no Sarutobi* (the comedy that inspired Ben Dunn's *Ninja High School* comic book series). For action and drama check out Kaoru Shintani's *Cleopatra D.C.*, Hokusei Katsushika and Naoki Urasawa's *Master Keaton* or Kaiji Kawaguchi's *Silent Service*. Shojo titles worth investigating include *Aoi-chan Panic* by Izumi Takemoto (for younger kids), *Dark Green* by Junko Sasaki and Jet's *Phantom of the Opera*.

Sports manga have been sadly neglected in America, and there are some gems out there waiting to be discovered. The immensely under-appreciated Mitsuru Adachi has penned several excellent sports tales and his fine detail work and talent for breathing life into his characters has won him a large following in Japan. *Rough* is the story of a boy and a girl on a high-school swim team, and *Touch* is the tale of two twins and their passion for baseball.

Any of these manga would be great additions to a publisher's comic line. In the meantime, check out one or two and see what you've been missing. (W)

Freelance writer Paul Sudlow wants to thank David Rains and Carol Hynson for introducing him to Sanshiro² *and* Please Save My Earth *(respectively), many years ago. But we won't let him.*

SPEED RACER Kenpo girl Sanshiro really packs a punch.

F.Y.I.

INFO

You'll probably have to order these manga titles from a Japanese importer. Kinokunia bookstore in San Francisco is very accommodating and fills orders promptly. Give the store a call at (415) 567-7625. When ordering, simply provide the title, author and publisher.

Cityhunter, by Tsukasa Hojo, is available in a 35-volume set of graphic novels. They're published by Shueisha under the Jump Comics imprint. A.D. Vision has announced it will release the *Cityhunter* anime in America soon. Jackie Chan did a silly but fun live-action "Cityhunter" movie once, but it isn't distributed in the United States.

Kikuchi Shota's *Sanshiro²* has been collected in 20 volumes, and is published by Akita Shoten under its Shonen Champion Comics label. This title has never been animated.

Please Save My Earth, by Saki Hiwatari, has been collected in 21 volumes, and is published by Hakusensha under the Hana to Yume Comics imprint. Viz Video offers three *Please Save My Earth* anime videos for $24.95 each–plus a CD of the soundtrack.

SOUND BITES

"GOTTA GET IN TUNE WITH 'SAILOR MOON' 'CAUSE THE CARTOON HAS GOT THE BOOM ANIME BABES THAT MAKE ME THINK THE WRONG THING."
—*Barenaked Ladies, "One Week" (Stunt, Reprise Records, July 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

MANGAPICKS

MUST READ JAPANESE COMICS SHIPPING IN DECEMBER

Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back—Manga #1

DARK HORSE COMICS

The Force is with the "Star Wars" manga. When Dark Horse launched its *A New Hope* manga series this summer, it wasn't sure it would sell well enough to justify continuing to *The Empire Strikes Back*. But—like the original movie—the manga sold like gangbusters, so the *Empire* manga is a go. Join Luke, Han and Leia as they get their butts chased and kicked across the galaxy. Meet the manga Yoda! See manga AT-ATs, Snowspeeders and Tauntauns! Toshiki Kudo does the art honors on this outing. Like its predecessor, the *SW: ESB* manga will be released in four installments, each 96 pages long. **$9.95.**

Manga Max #1

TITAN

For many years, Viz's *Animerica* has been the only professional anime/manga mag on the market. But this month brings new challengers to the fray—including *Manga Max*. *Manga Max* covers anime, manga and Hong Kong movies on a monthly basis. The premiere issue hits the stands with a bang, with exclusive interviews with Masamune Shirow (*Ghost in the Shell, Appleseed*), Neil Gaiman (*Sandman*, "Princess Mononoke" scriptwriter) and Hong Kong actor Jet Li ("Lethal Weapon IV"). **$5.99.**

Dragonball Z Part Two #1

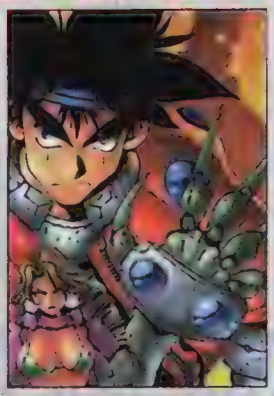
VIZ COMICS

Ready for another round of *Dragonball Z*? Good. The Saiyan invaders Napa and Vegeta have finally arrived on Earth, and lose no time in obliterating cities left and right. As martial arts champ Goku fights his way back to the land of the living from the spirit world, Earth heroes Gohan, Piccolo, Yamcha and the rest of the gang must rally and stop the nasty Saiyan in their tracks. Unfortunately, Vegeta declines to fight until our heroes have bested his little plant pets. **$2.95.**

Mechanical Man Blues #1

RADIO COMIX

Radio Comix officially joins the league of manga importers this month with its new Tsukasa Kotobuki title, *Mechanical Man Blues*. In a future world gone wrong, a desperate band of humans led by the lovely Lady Sonia fight a losing battle against the machines which seek their extinction. Enter Gun the Mechanical Man! Built by the machines to destroy the humans, Gun is kidnapped by Sonia while in suspended animation. Who will he serve when he awakens? He's the cool-looking guy on the cover, so chances are he'll join our hearty band of heroes, but since this is manga, nothing is certain. **$2.95.**



Shadow Lady #3

DARK HORSE COMICS

The joy has left Aimi's life. No longer does she desire to bound rooftop to rooftop as her alter-ego Shadow Lady, or even confound the police with her daring heists. With a shock, she realizes she's pining for a handsome man she glimpsed—a nameless man who lives somewhere out there in the urban sprawl of Gray City. But Shadow Lady is about to discover the mysterious man *does* have a name, and a job: He's Inspector Bright Honda, the cop who has sworn to bring Shadow Lady to justice! **$2.50.**

Inu-Yasha Vol. 3 trade paperback

VIZ COMICS

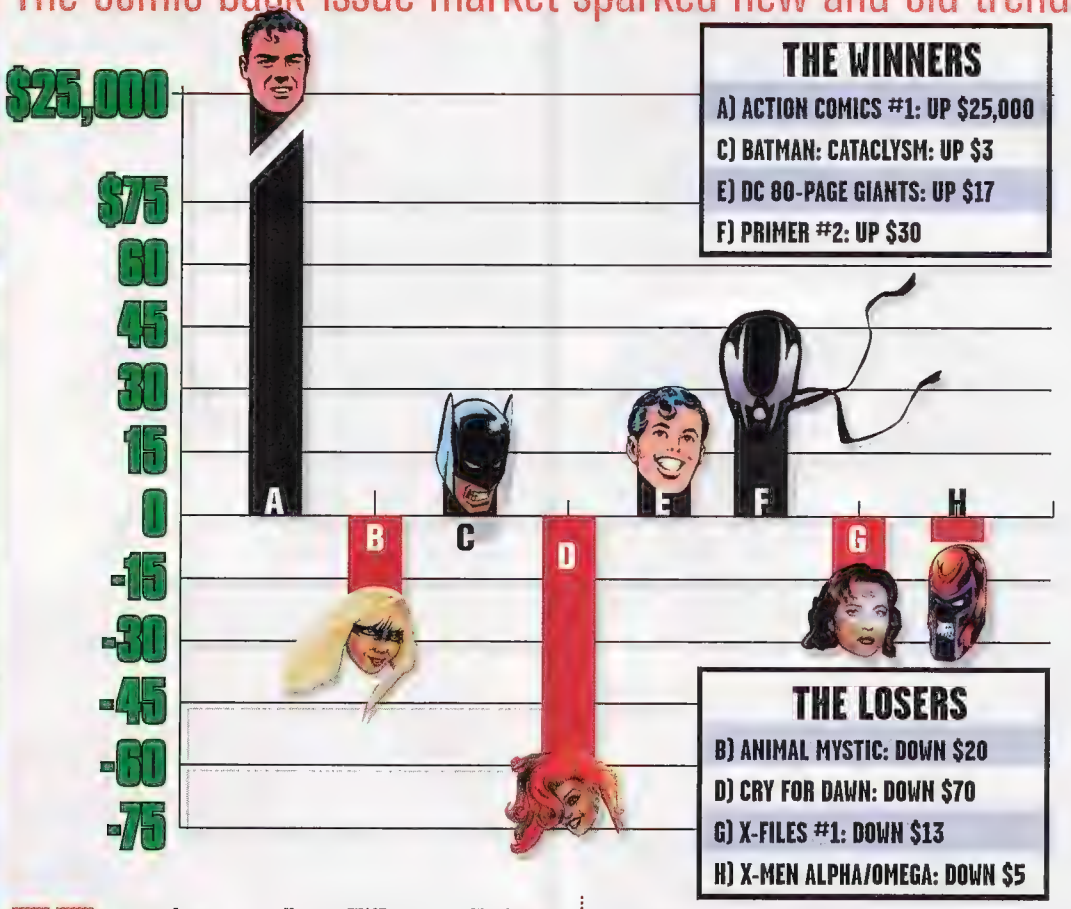
Poor schoolgirl Kagome is having the hardest time. First she must save the ancient world with her dog-demon companion Inu-Yasha—well, okay, she has to rescue a princess from a possessed feudal lord—and then she returns to the present to discover she's hopelessly behind in her schoolwork! Getting 'A's doesn't matter much to Inu-Yasha, but it's everything to the girl who wants to get into a good college. Unfortunately, with a man-eating Noh mask prowling the streets of Tokyo, it doesn't look like there'll be much time left over for studying! **$15.95.**

COMIC MARKET NEWS AND SUCH by Lars Pearson

MARKET WATCH

1998: THE WINNERS AND LOSERS

The comic back-issue market sparked new and old trends



Hey, any bozo can tell you Cliffhanger, *Clerks* and *KISS* are hot. But some very important trends move more like turtles than jackrabbits. Here are a few slow-and-steady moves that symbolized 1998:

Action Comics #1 (DC Comics): Books from the Golden Age? They're good as gold. Most 1940s-era books are so rare, they're pretty much guaranteed not to lose value, even if they don't gain a lot. But 1998 was *very* good to *Action Comics* #1, Superman's first appearance. Its value increased $25,000, bumping up to $200,000. Supply is the key, since only about 75 copies are known to exist, and only *one* of those is in unrestored, near-mint condition.

Animal Mystic #1 (Cry For Dawn): Folks, beware irregularly published independent books, because it's only so long before their small legion of fans stops paying top dollar for them. The once-roasting *Animal Mystic* #1 slid from $65 to $45 due to an erratic publishing schedule—and the same fate looks likely for titles such as *Snowman* and *Cavewoman*.

Batman: Cataclysm (DC Comics): The Batman books from last year's "Cataclysm" earthquake crossover only rose a few bucks, but any gain is significant in a market soaked with new Batman product. And remember—these issues provide crucial lead-ins to 1999's year-long "No Man's Land" Batman story arc.

SOUND BITES

"MY FIRST BOOK, *CABLE* #51, WAS WRITTEN ON A TV TRAY. I BOUGHT IT AT A USED FURNITURE STORE FOR A DIME."

—*Joe Casey, Cable writer, on breaking into comics (Wizard #85, September 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

Cry for Dawn (Cry For Dawn): Joseph Michael Linsner. Fans would die for his books. But that didn't stop Dawn's first appearance in *Cry For Dawn* #1 from taking a $70 tumble, inflated as it was from previous boom years. Hungry fans might decide they can now buy it cheap, but it's a little early to tell this book's fate.

DC 80-Page and 100-Page Giants: In the 1970s, DC would occasionally throw an oddball 80- or 100-page work into the regular run of a title. In 1998, collectors started buying these behemoths up in huge numbers. Issues such as *Superboy and the Legion of Super-Heroes* #202 and #205 and *Justice League of America* (vol. 1) #39, #48, #58, #85 and #93 moved from $3 each to $20 a pop. Why? These larger-sized issues were higher-priced and, thus, lower-printed. Plus, a bigger size means they were more easily damaged.

Primer #2 (Comico): *Primer* #2, the first appearance of Grendel, is actually a symptom of Matt Wagner—the Grendel and Mage creator. As Wagner's current *Mage* series got hot, the effect whiplashed on to Wagner's other work. *Mage: The Hero Discovered* #1 raced from $12 to $20 and most *Grendel* issues gained a few bucks, with the rare *Grendel* #40 going from $3 to $16. Heck, even Wagner's DC stories, such as *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight* #28-#30, are selling briskly.

X-Files #1 (Topps): This case is almost closed. Formerly one of comics' hottest properties, *X-Files* #1 lost $13 to close the year at $32. An erratic publishing schedule can be blamed for a decline in interest in this comic.

X-Men Alpha/Omega (Marvel Comics): While the core X-Men books did well in 1998—*Uncanny X-Men* #350 was a major hit of the year—the X-Men spin-offs choked. Titles such as *Excalibur* and *X-Factor* either took hits or stayed in price limbo, and finite X-Men stories including *X-Men: Alpha* and *X-Men: Omega* (bookends to "Age of Apocalypse") couldn't sustain themselves.

SLIPCASE A 'CRISIS'

Destroying universes was not enough. *Crisis* is now rocking collectors' worlds everywhere.

DC Comics' upcoming *Crisis on Infinite Earths* hardcover slipcase edition—the only reprint of the continuity-shattering, 12-issue, 1985

PHOTOS: BUSIEK, KELLY, SMITH DAVID ADAM HUBERT, LEE, MADUREIRA, ROSS, THOMAS, WARD, BUMITA JR., QUESADA BY PAUL SCHRAUD; MURRISON BY BOB MARTIN; ANDY KUBERT BY C. BLANKENSHIP; PEREZ BY BOB SMITH; SEAGLE COURTESY OF STEVE SEAGLE; JURGENS BY WIZARD; CAMPBELL BY JOHN W. MCDONOUGH; MARZ BY JOSEPH SCHUTTLER.

TOP 10 CREATORS

FAN FAVORITES

These are the creators the fans crave. Creators whose name on a cover sells the book. *Wizard's* Top Ten Creators lists are derived from a nationwide retailer survey. Artists include pencilers and painters.

WRITERS

1. Mark Waid
Kingdom, Captain America

2. Kurt Busiek
Astro City, Avengers

3. Kevin Smith
Daredevil, Clerks

4. Garth Ennis
Preacher, Hitman

5. Grant Morrison
JLA, The Invisibles

6. Joe Kelly
Deadpool, X-Men

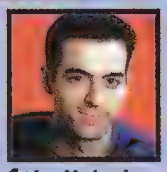
7. Steven T. Seagle
Alpha Flight, Uncanny X-Men

8. Ron Marz
Green Lantern

9. Dan Jurgens
Thor, Superman

10. Peter David
Supergirl, Young Justice

ARTISTS



1. Joe Madureira
Battle Chasers

2. Michael Turner
Fathom

3. J. Scott Campbell
Danger Girl

4. Alex Ross
Superman:Peace on Earth

5. George Pérez
Avengers

6. Jim Lee
Divine Right

7. Adam Kubert
X-Men

8. Joe Quesada
Daredevil, upcoming: Ash

9. Andy Kubert
Captain America

10. John Romita Jr.
Thor, Peter Parker: Spider-Man

BURIED TREASURE

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THIS

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES (vol. 4) #15

It's Brando! No, not *Marlon* Brando. It's penciler Brandon Peterson! He's the artist you might remember from previous tenures on *Uncanny X-Men* and *Arcanum*, and here's a little tip: Peterson is the odds-on favorite to return to the spotlight again as the new *Uncanny* artist by mid-1999.

That means you shouldn't miss *Legion of Super-Heroes* #15, Peterson's first work. Like most *Legion* books from the last 20 years, it sells for the cost of a few stamps, and could easily shoot up if Peterson's a hit on comics' flagship title. You have been warned. ■ LP

series—is expected to be a hit beyond words and worlds. After all, it has revamped coloring and a brain-ripping cover featuring every *Crisis* character down to the Bug-Eyed Bandit (!) by artists George Pérez and Alex Ross.

Unfortunately, the slipcase *Crisis* retails for a back-breaking $99.95—a tough price wall to climb. And since DC has sworn that this *Crisis* will be the only version produced—meaning no paperback—you either pay up or give up.

So frugal collectors, spurred by nostalgia, are already plugging holes in their *Crisis* sets. Some reports have the issues going for two or three times current guide price! While this isn't widespread, it does mean *Crisis* is on the upswing. If you're gonna play the game, grab key issues such as *Crisis* #7 (the death of Supergirl), *Crisis* #8 (the Barry Allen Flash kicks it), and *Crisis* #12 (the low-printed finale) early.

"CRISIS" *Crisis on Infinite Earths* #12 is the toughest book to find of DC's cataclysmic 1985-86 mini-series.

McFARLANE PULLS 'HELLCOP' DUTY

Start your Spawnmobiles! Nobody saw it coming, but October's *Hellcop* #1 from Avalon Studios featured a completely *unannounced* variant cover by none other than (drum roll, please!) *Spawn* creator Todd McFarlane!

Busy as hell running his comic/toy/movie/plumbing empire, McFarlane rarely draws new art these days. So the *Hellcop* cover, done as a favor to Avalon publisher and longtime *Spawn* colorist Brian Haberlin, is a sure hit. But since the cover was distributed in a 50:50 ratio, a decent amount exist. Still, it's already moving in the $4 range. Very cool—and for now,inexpensive.

Current Wizard *Price Guide manager and former Iowa farmboy Lars Pearson is an expert in the area of animal husbandry. We can say no more.*

RETAILER NETWORK & V.I.P.s

RELIABLE SOURCES

Bruno Andreacch
B.A.'s Comics & Nostalgia
121 Oxford St. East London
Ontario Canada N6A 1T4
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Chris Bucchik
Wizard World
Rockland Center
51 E. Rt. 59
Nanuet, NY 10954
(914) 624-2224

Dave Braunstein
Eldorado Comics
2110 E. Rt. 70
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
(609) 489-1199

Rich Conroy
Heroes & Fantasies
914 Fort Bowker Road
Universal City, TX 78148
(210) 945-9984

D. Roberts & J. Walker
Legends Comics
Kentucky Oaks Mall
5101 Hinkleville Rd.
Paducah, KY 42001
(612) 822-2806

Dash Hobbeheydar &
Mark Laskowski
And Then it Rained Comics
P.O. Box 11041
Scottsdale, AZ 85271
(602) 990-9224

Steve Huber
Galaxy Comics
10 North 36th Street
Richmond, IN 47374
(765) 962-8239

Brian Kozicki & John Cathell
Buried Under Comics
188 West Middle Turnpike
Manchester, CT 06040
(860) 643-7295

Ivan Matos
Comic Connection
2128-C Fort Campbell Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37042
(615) 572-9588

Ron McClure
American Comics and Cards
6787 Lee Highway
Chattanooga, TN 37421
(423) 490-0501

Avrom Oliver
Adventures in Comics & Games
6026 Fair Oaks Blvd.
Carmichael, CA 95608
(916) 973-9064

Jerry Ringi
Amazing Fantasy
4300 Portsmouth Blvd.
Suite 192
Chesapeake, VA 23321
(757) 465-8390

Tom Shea
TJ Collectibles
160 Main St.
Milford, MA 01757
(508) 473-5874

Steve Snyder
Central City Comics
1460 Bethel Rd.
Columbus, OH 43220
(614) 459-5045

Joel Thingvall
Nostalgia Zone
3149 1/2 Hennepin Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55406
(612) 822-2806

Doug Miers
Comics Conspiracy
115 A. East Fremont Ave.
Sunnyville, CA 94087
(408) 245-6275

Stuart Wagner
Caveman
1344 E. Battlefield
Springfield, MO 65804
(417) 882-2283

Robert Scott
Comickaze Comics
& Sportscards
5615 Balboa Ave.
San Diego, CA 92111
(619) 278-0371

Nolan Wyatt
Golden Apple Comics
7711 Melrose
Los Angeles, CA 90046
(213) 658-6047

Todd McDevitt
New Dimension Comics
Units 20-21
20550 Rte. 19
Cranberry Township, PA
16066-7520
(412) 776-0433

Phil Davis
B & D Comic Shop
802 Elm St. South West
Roanoke, VA 24016
(703) 342-6642

Damon McCulloch
Comics & Comix
6135 Sunrise Blvd.
Citrus Heights, CA 95610
(916) 969-0717

Robert Letscher II
Key Comics
PO Box 3855
Scottsdale, AZ 85271-3855
(602) 949-8499

John Chrusckinski &
Bruce Ellsworth
Tropic Comics
313 S. State Rd. #7
Plantation, FL 33317

James Elkins
Comic Connection
21280 Ft. Campbell Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37042
(615) 572-9588

David Beauchamp
Penguin Comics
3315 S. Welwood
Springfield, MO 65804
(417) 551-2051

John Graziano
Comics Plus
1383 Highway 35
Middletown, NJ 07748
(908) 706-0102

Mark Thompson
Cold Cuts
5704 Calmor Ave. #1
San Jose, CA 95123
(408) 229-0930

Jamie Graham
5 East Chicago Ave.
Naperville, IL 60540
(630) 778-0700

Mike Johnson
Golden Apple
7711 Melrose Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Brian Johnson
All About Books & Comics
517 E. Camelback
Phoenix, AZ 85012
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SOUND BITES

"IF FOR ONE MONTH DC HAS A BIGGER SLICE OF THE PIE, THEN GEEZ, THEY GOTTA LUCK OUT SOME TIME."
—Shirrel Rhodes, executive veep for publishing at Marvel, on DC winning the sales battle in July for the first time in years (Wizard #86, October 1998)

THE BEST BITES OF 1998

TOP 10 comics

Hey! This ain't no regular "Top 10 Comics" this month! Nope. We've got the top 10 comics of the whole *year*, based on rankings in "Top 10 Comics" over the past 12 months!

1 JLA #1

WRITER: Grant Morrison
ARTISTS: Howard Porter and John Dell

Take a tip from our friend, the tortoise—slow and steady wins the race. Here's yer proof: while *JLA* #1 only finished in the top spot twice in 1998, it was consistently high enough on our list to score this year's top prize. Er...actually, there's no prize. Rip-off! Hey, in honor of the aforementioned tortoise, maybe next year Fastback from *Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew* will join the JLA! Hey, you never know! Grant Morrison does crazy stuff like that!

2 KISS: THE PSYCHO CIRCUS #1

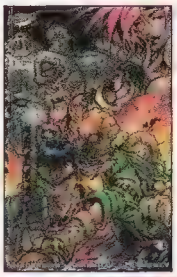
WRITER: Brian Holguin
ARTISTS: A. Medina and K. Conrad

Kids always crave that which their parents disapprove of. For example, cookies before dinner. B.B. guns. Or four grown men in leather, studs and Kabuki makeup spitting blood and playing thunder-metal loud enough to blow your dad's stupid wig off. Hence, this book hit the No. 1 spot once and trampled over the list all year with big, spiky moon boots. Yeah, we insulted your dad's wig. What're you gonna do about it, sissy-mary?

3 WITCHBLADE #1

WRITERS: D. Wohl, B. Haberlin and Christina Z.
ARTISTS: Michael Turner and D-Tron

This juggernaut spent a month at No. 1 and shook its little tush on the "Top 10 Comics" catwalk nearly all year long. We love Witchy-poo so much we thought we might expand our literary horizons here with a little poetry throwdown. Ahem. "Sara Pezzini; my, she is dreamy..." Um...this sucks.



4 BATTLE CHASERS #1

WRITERS: Joe Madureira and Munier Sharrieff
ARTISTS: Joe Madureira and Tom McWeeney

Something rhymes with "Joe Mad," but we'd rather focus on this book's incredible performance in the past year. Five consecutive No. 1 finishes in a row, baby! Why didn't this puppy stomp *JLA* #1? Well, it's only been on the list for six months. Plus, Tom McWeeney doesn't think our pie jokes are funny. You're gonna get yours, McWeeney!

5 UNCANNY X-MEN #350

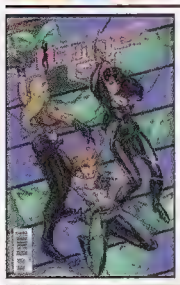
WRITER: Steven T. Seagle
ARTISTS: J. Madureira, A. Smith, T. Townsend, V. Russell and D. Panosian

The world's gone Gambit NUTTY! Reports indicate that another famous Cajun, that "I gare-on-tee" guy Justin Wilson, put on a trenchcoat and ran around the house with socks on his hands, throwing playing cards at the grandkids until authorities were called in to sedate him. NUTTY!

6 JLA #2

WRITER: Grant Morrison
ARTISTS: Howard Porter and John Dell

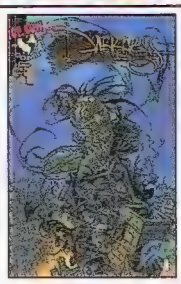
You know the deal with #2 issues. No need to even explain it. Hmm. Actually, we've got a bit more space to fill, so we'll explain it anyway. Retailers order more #1 issues than #2 issues, so them twosies are scarcer than onesies. Result? *JLA* #2 captured our top spot twice, and stayed hot most of the year. Got it? Got it.



7 DANGER GIRL #1

WRITERS: J. Scott Campbell and Andy Hartnell
ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner

You can call him Jeff. Or you can call him Scott. You can even call him Mr. Chuckles, which he sometimes seems to prefer. Whatever you call him, be nice, because with 11 jillion copies of *Danger Girl* #1 getting gobbled up by fans, perhaps J. Scott Campbell will lend you a dollar. Two if you call him Mr. Chuckles.



8 THE DARKNESS #1

WRITER: Garth Ennis
ARTISTS: Marc Silvestri and Batt

Ennis, anyone? BWAH! Okay, okay, put down the rotten fruit and let's get down to brass tacks. This li'l supernova we call *The Darkness* #1 set our chart ablaze for many moons, and continues to sell like ice to Eskimos–no, wait, that ain't right. Fire? No...that'd melt their igloos. Damn...Eskimos are tough customers.

9 THE DARKNESS #11 (CHROMIUM COVER)

WRITERS: Garth Ennis and Malachy Coney
ARTISTS: Marc Silvestri, Joe Benitez, Clarence Lansang and Livesay

How freakin' scarce is this here issue? Imagine a planet covered in needles hurtling toward a planet covered in haystacks. When they meet–KER-PLOW! Are you concentrating? Think about this very hard. Good. Now we'll just...steal your *Darkness* comic! Sucker!

10 CLERKS #1

WRITER: Kevin Smith
ARTIST: Jim Mahfood

Kevin Smith used to be a real-life "clerk." That's what adds such vibrant realism to this here hot-as-a-firecracker funnybook. To prep for *Daredevil*, which he's also writing, Smith tied a scarf around his eyes and jumped off a building. Therefore, *Clerks* #1 will continue to increase in value, especially if it's signed.

THE HIGHEST-ORDERED BOOKS FOR THE MONTH OF **OCTOBER**

TOP100

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff, and working off the data supplied by Diamond Comic Distributors.

The "Hunt For Xavier" kicked off in *Uncanny* #362, as the X-Men found...two Xaviers! Yowza!

1. Uncanny X-Men #362 (Marvel)
2. X-Men #82 (Marvel)
3. Fathom #3 (Top Cow/Image)
4. Battle Chasers #6 (Cliffhanger/Image)
5. Spawn #79 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
6. Slingers #1 (Marvel)
7. Avengers #11 (Marvel)
8. Spider-Man: Chapter One #2 (Marvel)
9. Wolverine #132 (Marvel)
10. Spider-Man: Chapter One #1 (Marvel)
11. JLA #24 (DC)
12. Avengers Forever #1 (Marvel)
13. Fantastic Four #12 (Marvel)
14. Daredevil #2 (Marvel)
15. Captain America #12 (Marvel)
16. JLA/Titans #1 (DC)
17. Witchblade #27 (Top Cow/Image)
18. Mutant X #3 (Marvel)
19. Iron Man #11 (Marvel)
20. Thor #6 (Marvel)
21. Darkness #19 (Top Cow/Image)
22. Crimson #6 (Cliffhanger/Image)
23. JLA: Year One #12 (DC)
24. Generation X #45 (Marvel)
25. Curse of the Spawn #26 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
26. Divine Right #8 (WildStorm/Image)
27. Green Lantern #107 (DC)
28. Generation X #46 (Marvel)
29. Spider-Girl #3 (Marvel)
30. Captain America: Sentinel Of Liberty #4 (Marvel)
31. X-Force #84 (Marvel)
32. X-Men: Liberators #2 (Marvel)
33. Darkchylde: The Legacy #2 (Homage/Image)
34. X-Men Unlimited #21 (Marvel)
35. Inhumans #2 (Marvel)
36. X-Man #45 (Marvel)
37. Incredible Hulk #471 (Marvel)
38. X-Man #46 (Marvel)
39. Black Panther #2 (Marvel)
40. Cable #62 (Marvel)
41. KISS: The Psycho Circus #14 (Todd McFarlane/Image)
42. Superman #140 (DC)
43. Action Comics #749 (DC)
44. Adventures of Superman #563 (DC)
45. Young Justice #3 (DC)
46. Superman: The Man of Steel #84 (DC)
47. Gen^{13} #34 (WildStorm/Image)
48. Batman #560 (DC)
49. Ascension #11 (Top Cow/Image)
50. Detective Comics #727 (DC)
51. Thunderbolts #21 (Marvel)
52. Nightwing #26 (DC)
53. Buffy the Vampire Slayer #2 (Dark Horse)
54. Punisher #2 (Marvel)
55. Superman For All Seasons #4 (DC)
56. A-Next #3 (Marvel)
57. Batman: Sdw. of the Bat #80/Azrael: Agent of the Bat #47 (DC)
58. Spirit of the Tao #5 (Top Cow/Image)
59. Preacher #44 (Vertigo/DC)
60. Martian Manhunter #1 (DC)
61. Flash #143 (DC)
62. Marvel Annual '98: X-Force & Champions (Marvel)
63. Deadpool #23 (Marvel)
64. J2 #3 (Marvel)
65. Darkminds #4 (Image)
66. Superman: The Doomsday Wars #2 (DC)
67. Hellcop #1 (Avalon/Image)
68. Sin City: Just Another Saturday Night (D.H.)
69. Green Lantern 80-Page Giant #1 (DC)
70. Alpha Flight #17 (Marvel)
71. Wolverine: Black Rio (Marvel)
72. Marvel Annual '98: Generation X & Dracula (Marvel)
73. Gen^{13}: Magical Drama Queen Roxy #1 (WildStorm/Image)
74. Catwoman #63 (DC)
75. Robin #59 (DC)
76. Stone #3 (Avalon/Image)
77. Rampaging Hulk #5 (Marvel)
78. Supergirl #27 (DC)
79. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #113 (DC)
80. The Tenth #14 (Image)
81. Green Lantern 3-D #1 (DC)
82. Wonder Woman #139 (DC)
83. Chastity Rocked #1 (Chaos!)
84. Superman: The Dark Side #3 (DC)
85. Legends of the DC Universe #11 (DC)
86. Superman: War of the Worlds (DC)
87. Superman/Silver Banshee #1 (DC)
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90. Lady Death #10 (Chaos!)
91. Star Wars: Jedi Academy—Leviathan #1 (D.H.)
92. Supernaturals #1 (Marvel)
93. Star Wars: Mara Jade—By the Emperor's Hand #3 (D.H.)
94. Batman/Judge Dredd: Die Laughing #1 (DC)
95. Heroes For Hire #18 (Marvel)
96. Batman: Dark Knight of the Round Table #1 (DC)
97. Deadpool Team-Up Starring Widdle Wade (Marvel)
98. Starman #48 (DC)
99. Supernaturals #2 (Marvel)
100. WildCORE #8 (WildStorm/Image)

SOUND BITES — THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

"THE MANDATE I'VE BEEN HANDED BY MARVEL IS, 'JOHN, YOU'RE GOD NOW.'"
—John Byrne on his Spider-Man revamp (Wizard #83, July 1998)

TOP 100 HIGHLIGHTS

SPIDEY WEBS MULTIPLE WINNERS

Slingers #1; Spider-Man: Chapter One #2, #1 (Nos. 6, 8, 10)

This October, Marvel landed some big Spider-Man treats in its bag.

Spider-Man spinoff title *Slingers* led the arach-attack, aided by four "alternate interior" versions featuring four different chunks of story. *Slingers* #1 ranked No. 6 and didn't even *have* to feature Spidey! Instead, the new ongoing focused on a quartet of newcomers using Spidey's old "Identity Crisis" costumes. And the retro *Spider-Man: Chapter One*–with art and story by revamp maestro John Byrne–also posted high, but with a strange twist: *Chapter One* #2 actually outsold #1, since both shipped in the same month and #2 had Marvel's customary two-cover split for #2 issues.

Witchblade #27 (No. 17)

Can *Witchblade* survive without superstar artist Michael Turner? If this month's numbers are any indication, the answer is, "yes." *Witchblade* took a slice to its sales last issue because of Turner's departure after #25. But this month, Witchy-Poo nudged up three slots and posted a 13 percent hike in sales. Looks as if, even post-Turner, *Witchblade* is thrivin' and survivin'.

Divine Right #8 (No. 26)

Here's a head-scratcher: First, star penciler Jim Lee launches *Divine Right* with little fanfare. After a few issues, people turn on to the book and sales increase. Then, Lee fails to publish *Divine Right* for...oooh...six months. Sales plummet. Now the title's back up and running, and #8 rebounds 18 slots up the chart? Just goes to show you: Jim Lee is the Teflon man–nothing sticks to him. Can he do no wrong in the eyes of fans?

Inhumans #2, Black Panther #2 (Nos. 35, 39)

The entire Marvel Knights line (commanded by creators/editors Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti) held its own with #2 issues, and *Inhumans* and *Black Panther* actually *went up* the chart! That's (*ahem*) inhuman! Granted, these books had the Marvel two-cover split. But most importantly, the bounce is due to amazing fan buzz and lightning-quick sellouts of Marvel Knights #1 issues. Looks like the Knights are here to stay.

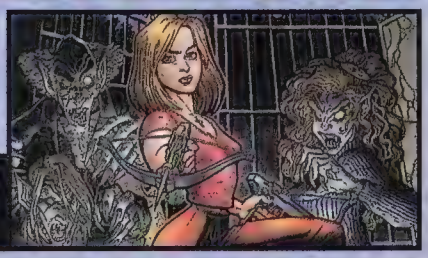
Supernaturals #1-#4 (Nos. 92, 99, 103, 104)

The fires of Hell...ain't so hot. Stoked by the Chaos! creative team of Brian Pulido (*Lady Death*), Marc Andreyko (*The Lost*) and Ivan Reiss (*Lady Death: Dragon Wars*), the ranking of this Marvel horror mini-series was rather disappointing. Mind you, *Supernaturals* did carry a tough climb of a cover price at $3.99 per issue, but given Marvel Knights' success with similar second-tier characters, *Supernaturals* looked like Circus Peanuts on the day after Halloween.

STICK IT! A Colorforms cover was seen but once...and was gone.

CLOSE-UP LOOK

Break it on down now! Here's a look at the top-selling books in a couple of categories, with their overall Diamond Comic Distributors "Top 300" rankings in parentheses.



LOVE HURTS! Buffy staked the competition through the heart in the race to be the top independent book of the month.

TOP 10 INDEPENDENT (NON-MARVEL, DC, IMAGE) COMICS

1. Buffy the Vampire Slayer #2 (Dark Horse, No. 53)
2. Sin City: Just Another Saturday Night (Dark Horse, No. 68)
3. Chastity Rocked #1 (Chaos!, No. 83)
4. Lady Death #10 (Chaos!, No. 90)
5. Star Wars: Jedi Academy—Leviathan #1 (D.H., No. 91)
6. Star Wars: Mara Jade—By the Emperor's Hand #3 (D.H., No. 93)
7. Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi—Redemption #4 (D.H., No. 101)
8. Purgatori #2 (Chaos!, No. 107)
9. Star Wars: X-Wing R. S.—Mandatory Ret. #4 (D.H., No. 109)
10. Xena: Warrior Princess—Wrath of Hera #2 (Topps, No. 110)

TOP 10 'ADJECTIVE' COMICS

1. "Uncanny" X-Men #362 (Marvel, No. 1)
2. "Battle" Chasers #6 (Cliffhanger/Image, No. 4)
3. "Fantastic" Four #12 (Marvel, No. 13)
4. "Iron" Man #11 (Marvel, No. 19)
5. "Divine" Right #8 (WildStorm/Image, No. 26)
6. "Green" Lantern #107 (DC, No. 27)
7. "Incredible" Hulk #471 (Marvel, No. 37)
8. "Black" Panther #2 (Marvel, No. 39)
9. "Action" Comics #749 (DC, No. 43)
10. "Young" Justice #3 (DC, No. 45)

LOOKING BACK

What topped the charts FIVE YEARS AGO?

1. Spawn #19 (Image)
2. X-Men #29 (Marvel)
3. Uncanny X-Men #309 (Marvel)
4. Superman: The Man of Steel #30 (DC)
5. Codename: Stryke Force #1 (Image)
6. WildC.A.T.s #7 (Image)
7. Superboy #1 (DC)
8. Superman #86 (DC)
9. Adventures of Superman #509 (DC)
10. X-Men 2099 #5 (Marvel)

How can a random issue of *Superman: The Man* of Steel rank at No. 4? One word: Colorforms!

Back when gimmick covers ruled the day, *MoS* #30 gained big sales because it was polybagged with Colorforms–cute little stick-on plastic figures–featuring Superman and this issue's nemesis, Lobo. Nice idea, but it got lost among the many shiny and embossed covers on the racks. Colorforms couldn't "stick" as a cover concept.

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C.B.I.Q.

YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SMART...

That faint melody in the air, that unmistakable stench of bourbon...it can only mean one thing: the annual ALL-VISUAL CBIQ! Get ready to test your comic knowledge and be graded against the top news stories of '98 that are made more entertaining by tacking on "and then the squirrels attacked!" at the end. The higher your score, the bigger the news story.

SCORE	RANK
0-4	*North Korea stunned the world by firing a missile over Japan...and then the squirrels attacked!*
5-10	*President Clinton faced an impeachment inquiry after he allegedly perjured himself regarding Monica Lewinsky...and then the squirrels attacked!*
11-14	*Hurricane Georges ran amok, claiming hundreds of lives in the Dominican Republic...and then the squirrels attacked!*
15	*In response to Pakistan's nuclear testing, India began testing its own nuclear weapons...and then the squirrels attacked!*

1 Which of the following *muchachas* is NOT a member of spy-team supreme, Danger Girl?

A

B

C

D

2 How did Jim Lee look when he finally sold WildStorm to DC?

A

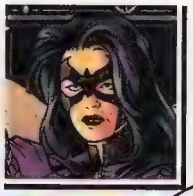
B

C

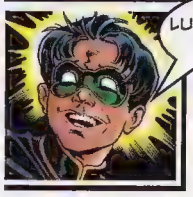
D

3 Who did Nightwing shtup this year?

A

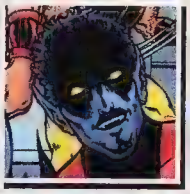
B 

C

D 

4 When the X-Men's roster went through another change this year, which mutant DIDN'T end up as part of the team?

A

B 

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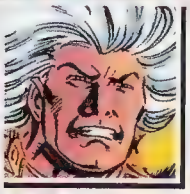
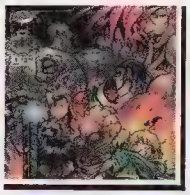
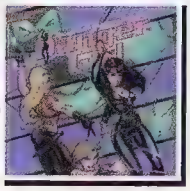
D 

5 Which book this year defied the laws of the space/time continuum by daring to be...a quarterly "monthly" book?

A

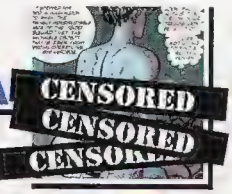
B 

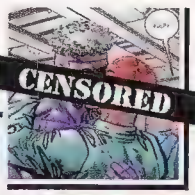
C 

D

E All of the above. Slackers.

6 Which was the most risqué comic panel in *Savage Dragon* this year?

A 

B 

C

D

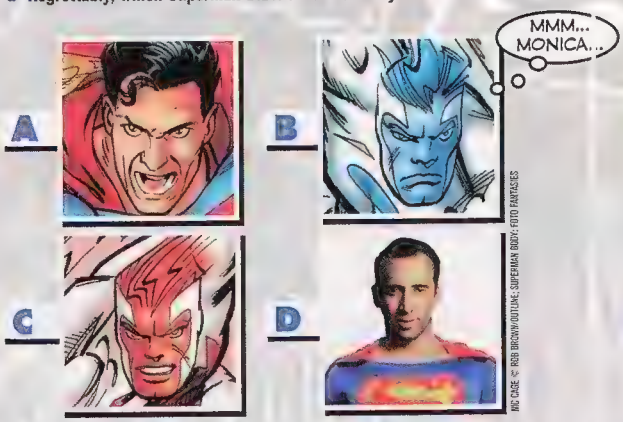
ANSWERS

Candy-asses can peek on page 239 if this is too tough...

"HE SHOULD BE WORRIED ABOUT GETTING DATES, NOT WHAT I'M DOING."
—*Ron Marz*, Green Lantern *writer, on 16-year-old Jack Grimes, who runs H.E.A.T., an organization calling for the return of Hal Jordan (*Wizard *#86, October 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

7 Regrettably, which Superman DIDN'T we see this year?

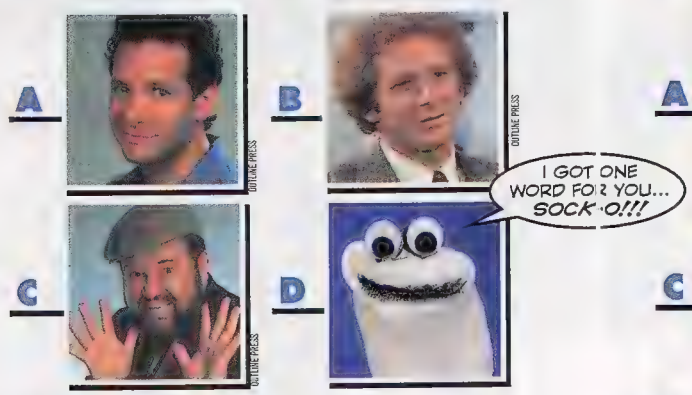


NIC CAGE © ROB BROWN/OUTLINE; SUPERMAN BODY: FOTO FANTASIES

8 Which creator would H.E.A.T. (Hal's Emerald Attack Team) like to see stuffed into a cannon?

ROB MARTIN

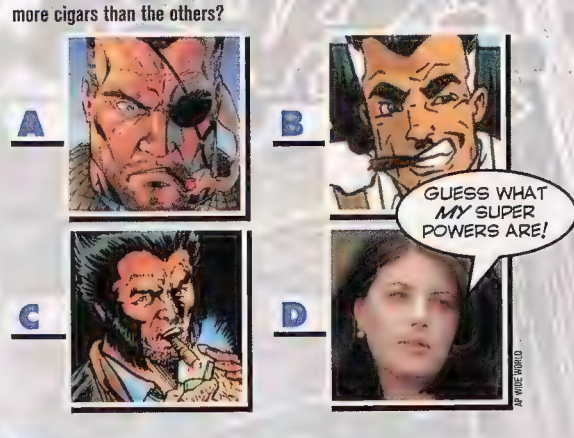
9 Though the "Blade" flick was pretty neat, who is the only other actor who would have been a LESS threatening villain than Stephen Dorff?



OUTLINE PRESS

10 Which horrible, grade-Z character that should have been killed off in *Crisis* is NOT a member of the JLA?

11 Which of these bigger-than-life comic characters goes through more cigars than the others?



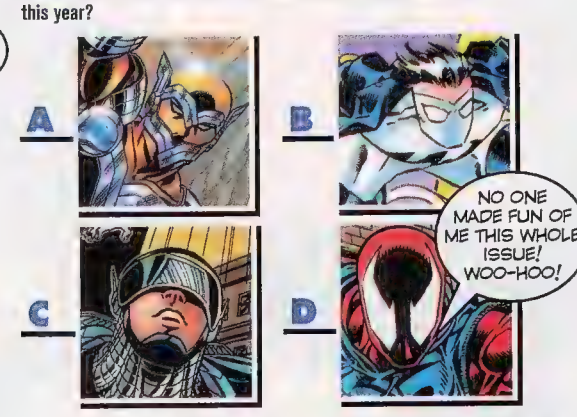
AP WIDE WORLD

12 Which has equal value of one...no, TWO shares of Marvel stock?

13 Which of the following images shows the Martian Manhunter in his true form?

EVERETT COLLECTION

14 Which of the following costumes DIDN'T Spider-Man wear this year?



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BULLPEN LOOK BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Turning Japanese

It was the biggest threat Wizard Entertainment had ever faced. As reported in *Wizard* #81's Bullpen, a weekly wrestling league sprang up around the Nintendo 64's *WCW vs. nWo: World Tour* video game. Every Monday night staffers would do battle, but then, at last summer's Wizard World Chicago comic con, a Japanese version of the game was discovered–complete with more moves, options and wrestlers! Whoo-hoo! As the celabratory kazoos fell silent and the confetti lay still, however, we learned the horrible truth: This Japanese game was, well, in Japanese. What were the new moves? How did you access the new options? WHAT THE HELL WERE THE NEW WRESTLER'S NAMES?!? As a heavy, Cthulhu-like cloud fell over the Bullpen, new ToyFare editor Matt Senreich shocked the crowd, saying, "Uhhh...I have a friend who speaks Japanese. But she's in Hong Kong and..." Before he could finish, the plan was set into motion: have a photographer come in and shoot the screens, get the slides back, scan them into the computer, print them out and get 'em to Rory Spire in Hong Kong! As the days crawled by, a package finally arrived at Wizard HQ with...the complete translations! Huzzah! All the option controls, new moves, new wrestlers (such as the Funk Brothers, Andre the Giant and Tiger Mask!). So how did the knowledge that the hopes and dreams of dozens of geeky fanboys rested on her shoulders sit with the bilingual Spire? "I don't get it. You guys play wrestling games at work? And now you're going to write about playing wrestling games for work? Does your boss know you do this?" Hmmm...we guess he does now. Hey Gareb, you wanna be Andre the Giant?

TOP10 rejected names for "Star Wars: Episode I" before they settled on "The Phantom Menace."

10 Droidspotting
9 Jedis Take Manhattan
8 Three Weddings, Two Death Stars Blow Up and a Funeral
7 Chewie, Chewie, Bang-Bang
6 Night of the Iguana
5 Return of the Jedi Again
4 Piano? What Piano?
3 Two Hours, 42 Creatures, 520 Action Figures
2 Boing!
1 Jackie Chan's The Phantom Menace

CBIQ answers...

from page 236

1. D	4. D	7. D	10. D	13. B
2. C	5. E	8. A-C	11. D	14. D
3. B	6. D	9. A	12. A	

ONE OF THE DAMNED

DOING HARD TIME

Gareb Shamus PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER

WHY WE PAY HIM: "I've been here since the start and it's easier to keep paying me than to get rid of me. I spend so much time in my office reading comics and playing video games nobody even knows I'm still here anyway. Oh, and I also make sure I have enough people on the payroll so I really don't have to work."

MOST BIZARRE WIZARD MOMENT: "Every day, senior staff writer Jim McLauchlin passes by my office, makes a lewd gesture, then later in the day pats me on the back and says, 'Keep up the good work.' It's a routine I've come to expect."

BEST OUT-OF-CONTEXT QUOTE: "Lars could be a woman." (Talking about Price Guide manager Lars Pearson, when trying to get a certain creator on the phone who only picks up when he hears a woman's voice.)

PHOTO: PAUL SCIRALLO

TIME TRAVEL by TOM ROOT

AARDVARK ASCENDANT

The Energizer Bunny of the small press, 'Cerebus' began its march 21 years ago

It began with a single page. Twenty-one years, 237 issues and nearly 5,000 pages later, it's difficult to imagine the small-press titan *Cerebus* in terms quite that minuscule. But for much of 1977, *Cerebus* was just that: a single page of artwork lying around the studio of 21-year-old freelance artist Dave Sim, an innocent herald of things to come.

The page, part of a proposal the Canadian had sent funny-animal anthology *Quack Comics*, collected dust while Sim tried to scrape up other freelance work. But much like his comic persona Cerebus, a sword-brandishing barbarian aardvark, Sim refused to lie down. Eventually, Sim and then-fiancée Deni Loubert decided to publish the comic themselves under the Aardvark-Vanaheim banner. "It sounds really weird to say it," Sim says, "but at the time, there really wasn't any sort of precedent for [self-publishing]." The comics world then consisted of DC and Marvel, with a scattering of underground comics; the small press as we know it today was virtually nonexistent.

Once decided, Sim added 21 pages to his initial sample, much of it drawn during a torturous bout of the flu. The result, aside from an industrial-sized drum of used tissue, was *Cerebus* #1. Sim quickly printed 2,000 copies of his creation. The accolades didn't exactly start rolling in.

But the self-publishing bug had a grip on Sim nonetheless. He doggedly displayed his wares at area conventions, and every two months he had a new issue to show. "I figured, at that point, the world was my oyster because I was actually putting an independent book out on time," he says. Sim figured with enough consistency, the book would turn into a hit.

Consistency soon became the book's calling card. With issue #14, *Cerebus* switched to a monthly schedule, a schedule Sim insisted he would keep until issue #300—more than a quarter-century away. The book slowly morphed from a *Conan the Barbarian* send-up into a massive, planned storyline equal parts sword-and-sorcery, social commentary and love story. Plans for #301 are slim; Sim insists his aardvark will die in *Cerebus* #300.

Today, Sim and background artist Gerhard are nearly four-fifths finished with Cerebus' tale. The series, still on its monthly schedule and with all back issues actively printed in thick "phone book" paperback volumes, is on track to conclude in 2004.

An outspoken proponent of self-publishing, Sim downplays his importance to novice small-press creators. "There's enough of a network out there and enough acceptance of self-publishing that I can't really say I've helped that many people," he says. But at 237 issues and counting, it's hard to imagine *Cerebus* as anything other than an inspiration to young cartoonists with dreams of small-press stardom.

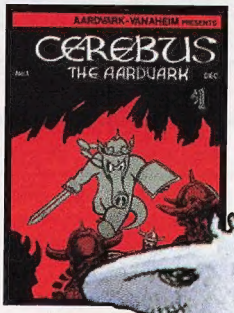
Because after that first page, who knows what might happen? (W)

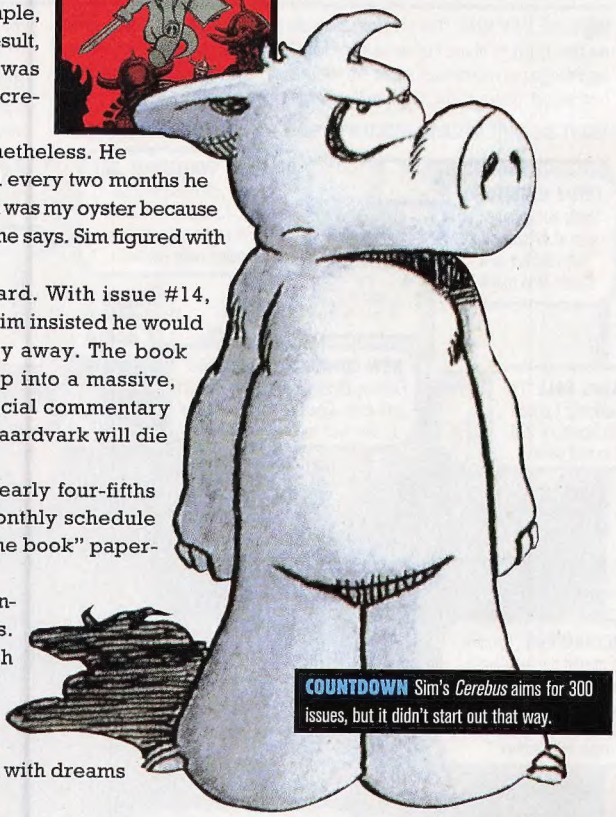
DATELINE

DECEMBER 1977

John Travolta becomes a movie star as "**Saturday Night Fever**" goes into wide release....Viewers couldn't get enough of "**Laverne and Shirley**," the highest-rated program of the 1977-1978 season....Pat Boone's little girl Debby sees her No. 1 hit, "**You Light Up My Life**," end a 10-week run at the top of the pops....Comic actor **Charlie Chaplin** is found dead on Christmas Day.

TRAVOLTA





COUNTDOWN Sim's *Cerebus* aims for 300 issues, but it didn't start out that way.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE EVERETT COLLECTION

SOUND BITES

"I'M A BIG FAN OF SUPERHERO COMICS, BUT I LOVE PIZZA, TOO. I JUST DON'T WANT TO EAT IT EVERY DAY."

—*Jim Valentino on alternative titles (Wizard #77, January 1998)*

THE BEST QUOTES OF 1998...

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CASEY LAU & KANO
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DECEMBER 1998

LAU & KAARE ANDREWS
scripted by TOM & MARY BEIRBAUM

JANUARY 1999

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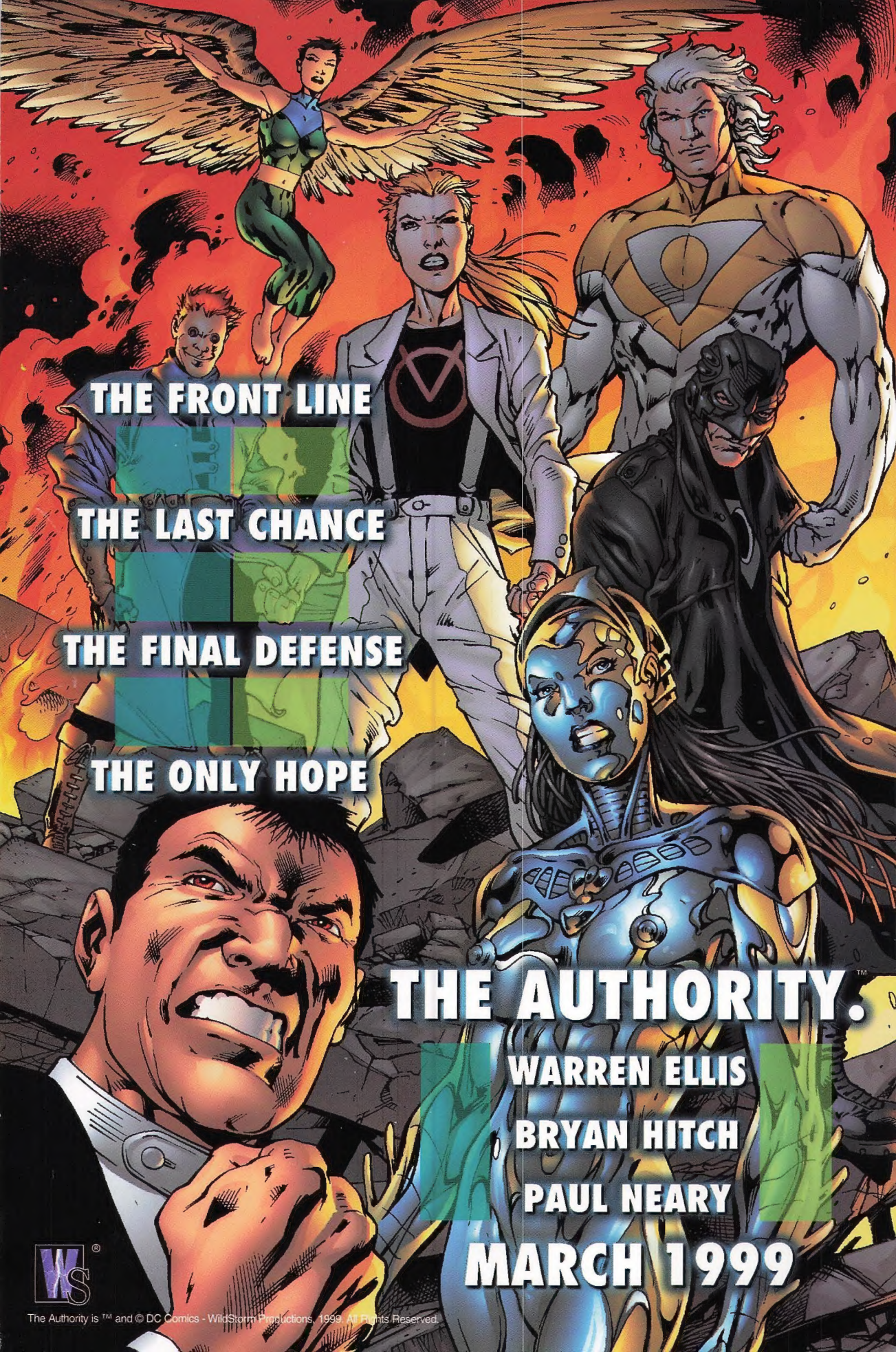
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